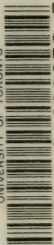


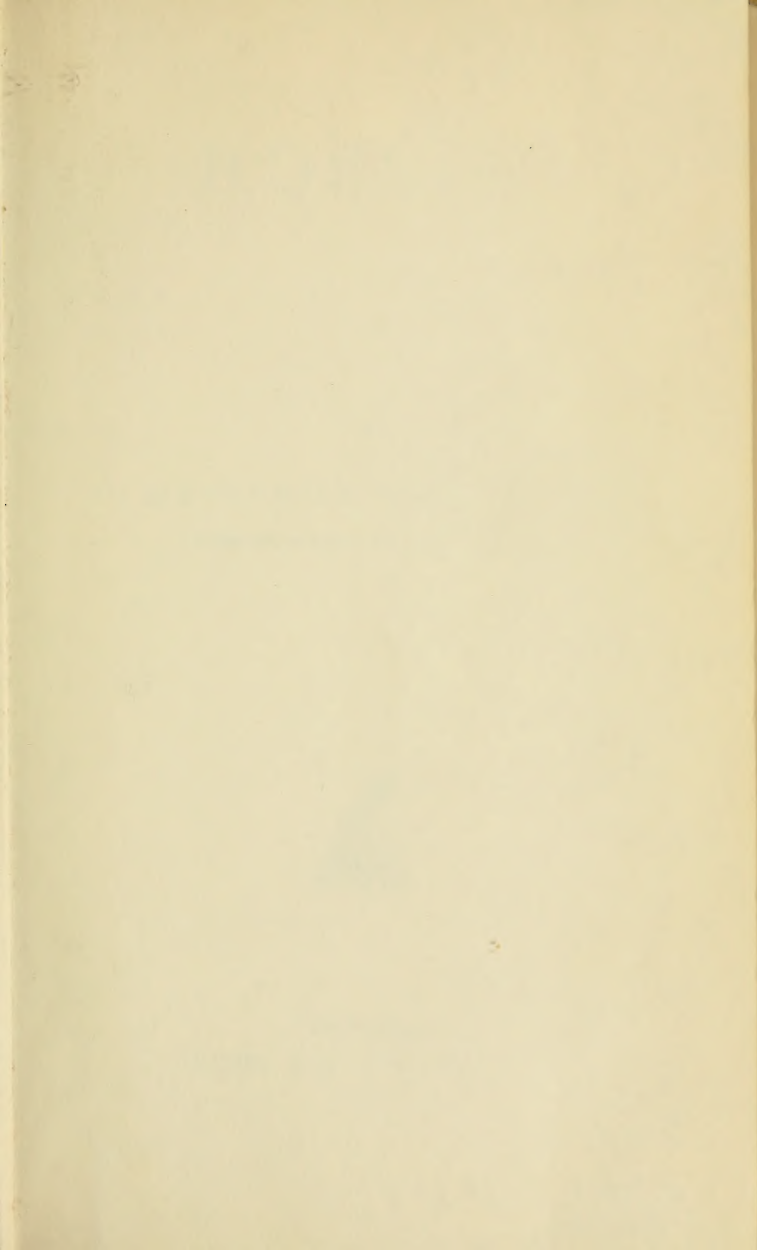
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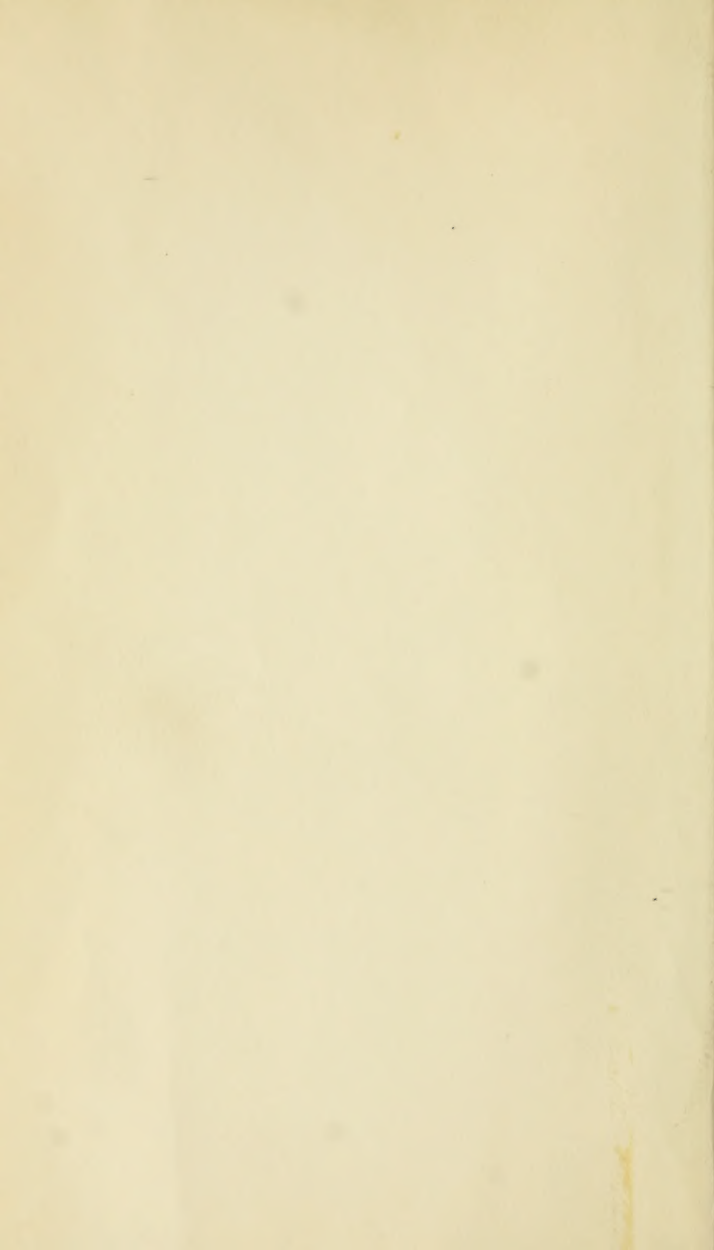


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RUSSIA

BY

D. MACKENZIE WALLACE, M.A.

Member of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society



NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

1877

RUSSIA

BY MAJOR ERNEST WALLACE, M.A.

Author of "The Russian Revolution"

New York : J. J. Little & Co., Printers,
10 to 20 Astor Place.

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1877



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PREFACE.

IN March, 1870, I arrived for the first time in St. Petersburg. My intention was to spend merely a few months in Russia, but I unexpectedly found so many interesting subjects of study that I remained for nearly six years—till December, 1875. During that period my winters were spent for the most part in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Yaroslaff, whilst the summer months were generally devoted to wandering about the country and collecting information from the local authorities, landed proprietors, merchants, priests, and peasantry. Since my return to England I have kept up a constant correspondence with numerous Russian friends, so that I have been able to follow closely what has taken place in the short interval.

Of the large mass of materials concerning the past history and present condition of the country, which accumulated in my hands during these six years, I have used in the present work merely those which seemed most likely to interest the general public. Special investigations regarding the Rural Commune, various systems of Agriculture, the History of the Emancipation, the present economic condition of the Peasantry, the Financial System, Public Instruction, recent Intellectual Movements, and similar topics, I reserve for a future volume.

If the work has any merits, they are to be attributed mainly to the assistance which was most liberally afforded me by Russians of all classes. Were I to give a list of those to whom I am indebted, it would fill many pages. I must, therefore, restrict

myself to naming a few to whom I am under special obligations. Much valuable service was rendered to me by Mr. Kapoustine, the learned and able Director of the School of Law in Yaroslaff, by Mr. Bolkashin, and by the other gentlemen connected with that admirable institution; also by Mr. Tchaslavski, my traveling companion during two summers; by Mr. A. N. Gontcharoff, who accompanied me in my journeys in the province of Samara; and by the late Mr. Edward J. Morgan, well known to Englishmen who have visited St. Petersburg. I have likewise to express respectfully my gratitude to Madame de Novikoff, *née* de Kiréeff, for assisting me in my efforts to reach the best living sources of information, and to Mr. E. I. Yakushkin, for placing at my disposal his vast stores of information regarding the Russian peasantry. Of the late Mr. N. A. Milútime, the late Mr. Samárin, Prince Tcherkassky, and Mr. Kosheléff, who aided me in my studies on the Emancipation, I have spoken in the chapter on that subject. The other Russians who helped me to procure materials and showed me all manner of kindness I must thank collectively. Very many of the views and opinions of these friends and acquaintances I have been obliged to reject, but I have never done so without first giving them careful consideration, and I have always striven to form my judgments in an unbiased and impartial spirit.

In conclusion, I have to put in a plea for the "Gentle Reader's" indulgence. The subject is so vast and so varied that it is no easy matter to select the topics which have most real importance, and to present them in such a manner as to convey a general idea of the country and the people. A few of the omissions I hope to fill up sometime in the not very distant future.

January 1st, 1877.

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RUSSIA.



CHAPTER I.

TRAVELING IN RUSSIA.

Railways—State Interference—River Communications—Russian "Grand Tour"—The Volga—Kazan—Zhigulinskiya Gori—Finns and Tartars—The Don—Difficulties of Navigation—Discomforts—Rats—Hotels—Peculiar Customs—Roads—Hibernian Phraseology Explained—Bridges—Posting—A Tarantass—Requisites for Traveling—Traveling in Winter—Frostbitten—Disagreeable Episodes—Scene at a Post-Station.

OF course traveling in Russia is no longer what it was. During the last quarter of a century a vast network of railways has been constructed, and one can now travel in a comfortable first-class carriage from Berlin to St. Petersburg or Moscow, and thence to Odessa, Sebastopol, the lower Volga, or even the foot of the Caucasus; and, on the whole, it must be admitted that the railways are tolerably comfortable. The carriages are decidedly better than in England, and in winter they are kept warm by small iron stoves, such as we sometimes see in steamers, assisted by double windows and double doors—a very necessary precaution in a land where the thermometer often descends to 30° below zero. The trains never attain, it is true, a high rate of speed—so at least English and Americans think—but then we must remember that Russians are rarely in a hurry, and like to have frequent opportunities of eating and drinking. In Russia time is *not* money; if it were, nearly all the subjects of the Tsar would always have a large stock of ready money on hand, and would often have great difficulty in spending it. In reality, be it parenthetically remarked, a Russian with a superabundance of ready money is a phenomenon rarely met with in real life.

In conveying passengers at the rate of from fifteen to thirty

miles an hour, the railway companies do at least all that they promise; but in one very important respect they do not always strictly fulfill their engagements. The traveler takes a ticket for a certain town, and on arriving at what he imagines to be his destination, he may find merely a railway-station surrounded by fields. On making inquiries, he finds, to his disappointment, that the station is by no means identical with the town bearing the same name, and that the railway has fallen several miles short of fulfilling the bargain, as he understood the terms of the contract. Indeed, it might almost be said that as a general rule railways in Russia, like camel-drivers in certain Eastern countries, studiously avoid the towns. This seems at first a strange fact. It is possible to conceive that the Bedouin is so enamoured of tent life and nomadic habits, that he shuns a town as he would a man-trap; but surely civil engineers and railway contractors have no such dread of brick and mortar. The true reason, I suspect, is that land within or immediately without the municipal barrier is relatively dear, and that the railways, being completely beyond the invigorating influence of healthy competition, can afford to look upon the comfort and convenience of passengers as a secondary consideration.

It is but fair to state that in one celebrated instance neither engineers nor railway contractors were to blame. From St. Petersburg to Moscow the locomotive runs for a distance of 400 miles, almost as "the crow" is supposed to fly, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left. For fifteen weary hours the passenger in the express train looks out on forest and morass, and rarely catches sight of human habitation. Only once he perceives in the distance what may be called a town; it is Tver which has been thus favored, not because it is a place of importance, but simply because it happened to be near the straight line. And why was the railway constructed in this extraordinary fashion? For the best of all reasons—because the Tsar so ordered it. When the preliminary survey was being made, Nicholas learned that the officers intrusted with the task—and the Minister of Ways and Roads in the number—were being influenced more by personal than technical considerations, and he determined to cut the Gordian knot in true Imperial style. When the Minister laid before him the map with the intention of explaining the proposed route, he took a ruler, drew a straight line from the one terminus

to the other, and remarked in a tone that precluded all discussion, "You will construct the line so!" And the line was so constructed—remaining to all future ages, like St. Petersburg and the Pyramids, a magnificent monument of autocratic power.

Formerly this well-known incident was often cited in whispered philippics to illustrate the evils of the autocratic form of government. Imperial whims, it was said, over-ride grave economic considerations. In recent years, however, a change seems to have taken place in public opinion, and some people now venture to assert that this so-called Imperial whim was an act of far-seeing policy. As by far the greater part of the goods and passengers are carried the whole length of the line, it is well that the line should be as short as possible, and that branch lines should be constructed to the towns lying to the right and left. Apart from political considerations, it must be admitted that a good deal may be said in support of this view.

In the development of the railway system there has been another disturbing cause, which is not likely to occur to the English mind. In England, individuals and companies habitually act according to their private interests, and the State interferes as little as possible; private initiative acts as it pleases, unless the authorities can prove that important bad consequences will necessarily result. In Russia, the *onus probandi* lies on the other side; private initiative is allowed to do nothing until it gives guarantees against all possible bad consequences. When any great enterprise is projected, the first question is—"How will this new scheme affect the interests of the State?" Thus, when the course of a new railway has to be determined, the military authorities are always consulted, and their opinion has a great influence on the ultimate decision. The consequence of this is that the railway-map of Russia presents to the eye of the tactician much that is quite unintelligible to the ordinary observer—a fact that will become apparent to the uninitiated as soon as a war breaks out in Eastern Europe. Russia is no longer what she was in the days of the Crimean War, when troops and stores had to be conveyed hundreds of miles by the most primitive means of transport. At that time she had only about 750 miles of railway; now she has more than 11,000 miles, and every year new lines are constructed.

The water-communication has likewise in recent years been greatly improved. On all the principal rivers there are now tol-

erably good steamers. Unfortunately, the climate puts serious obstructions in the way of navigation. For nearly half of the year the rivers are covered with ice, and during a great part of the open season navigation is difficult. When the ice and snow melt, the rivers overflow their banks and lay a great part of the low-lying country under water, so that many villages can only be approached in boats; but very soon the flood subsides, and the water falls so rapidly, that by midsummer the larger steamers have great difficulty in picking their way among the sand-banks. The Neva alone—that queen of northern rivers—has at all times a plentiful supply of water.

Besides the Neva, the rivers commonly visited by the tourist are the Volga and the Don, which form part of what may be called the Russian grand tour. Englishmen who wish to see something more than St. Petersburg and Moscow generally go by rail to Nizhni-Novgorod, where they visit the great fair, and then get on board one of the Volga steamers. For those who have mastered the important fact that there is no fine scenery in Russia, the voyage down the river is pleasant enough. The left bank is as flat as the banks of the Rhine below Cologne, but the right bank is high, occasionally well wooded, and not devoid of a certain tame picturesqueness. Early on the second day the steamer reaches Kazan, once the capital of an independent Tartar khanate, and still containing a considerable Tartar population. Several “metchets” (as the Mahometan houses of prayer are here termed), with their diminutive minarets in the lower part of the town, show that Islamism still survives, though the khanate was annexed to Muscovy more than three centuries ago; but the town, as a whole, has a European rather than an Asiatic character. If any one visits it in the hope of getting “a glimpse of the East,” he will be grievously disappointed, unless, indeed, he happens to be one of those imaginative tourists who always discover what they wish to see, especially when it can be made the subject of an effective chapter in their “*Impressions de Voyage*.” And yet it must be admitted that, of all the towns on the route, Kazan is the most interesting. Though not Oriental, it has a peculiar character of its own, whilst all the others—Simbirsk, Samara, Sarátov—are as uninteresting as Russian provincial towns commonly are. The full force and solemnity of that expression will be explained in the sequel.

Probably about sunrise on the third day something like a range of mountains will appear on the horizon. It may be well to say at once, to prevent disappointment, that in reality nothing worthy of the name of mountain is to be found in that part of the country. The nearest mountain-range in that direction is the Caucasus, which is several hundred miles distant, and consequently cannot by any possibility be seen from the deck of a steamer. The elevations in question are simply a low range of hills, called the Zhigulinskiya Gori. In Western Europe they would not attract much attention, but "in the kingdom of the blind," as the French proverb has it, "the one-eyed man is king;" and in a flat region like Eastern Russia these hills form a prominent feature. Though they have nothing of Alpine grandeur, yet their well-wooded slopes, coming down to the water's edge—especially when covered with the delicate tints of early spring, or the rich yellow and red of autumnal foliage—leave an impression on the memory not easily effaced.

On the whole—with all due deference to the opinions of my patriotic Russian friends—I must say that Volga scenery does not repay the time, trouble, and expense which a voyage from Nizhni to Tsaritsin demands. There are some pretty bits here and there, but they are "few and far between." A glass of the most exquisite wine diluted with twenty gallons of water makes a very insipid beverage. The deck of the steamer is generally much more interesting than the banks of the river. There one meets with curious traveling companions. The majority of the passengers are probably Russian peasants, who are always ready to chat freely without demanding a formal introduction, and to relate to a new acquaintance the simple story of their lives. Often I have thus whiled away the weary hours both pleasantly and profitably, and have always been impressed with the peasants' homely common sense, good-natured kindness, half-fatalistic resignation, and strong desire to learn something about foreign countries. This last peculiarity makes him question as well as communicate, and his questions, though sometimes apparently childish, are generally to the point. Among the passengers are probably also some representatives of the various Finnish tribes inhabiting this part of the country; they may be interesting to the ethnologist who loves to study physiognomy, but they are far less sociable than the Russians. Nature seems to have made them silent and

morose, whilst their conditions of life have made them shy and distrustful. The Tartar, on the other hand, is almost sure to be a lively and amusing companion. Most probably he is a peddler or small trader of some kind. The bundle on which he reclines contains his stock-in-trade, composed, perhaps, of cotton printed goods and bright-colored cotton handkerchiefs. He himself is enveloped in a capacious greasy *khalat*, or dressing-gown, and wears a fur cap, though the thermometer may be at 90° in the shade. The roguish twinkle in his small piercing eyes contrasts strongly with the somber, stolid expression of the Finnish peasants sitting near him. He has much to relate about St. Petersburg, Moscow, and perhaps Astrakhan; but, like a genuine trader, he is very reticent regarding the mysteries of his own craft. Towards sunset he retires with his companions to some quiet spot on the deck to recite the evening prayers. Here all the good Mahometans on board assemble and stroke their beards, kneel on their little strips of carpet and prostrate themselves, all keeping time as if they were performing some new kind of drill under the eye of a severe drill-sergeant.

If the voyage is made about the end of September, when the traders are returning home from the fair at Nizhni-Novgorod, the ethnologist will have a still better opportunity of study. He will then find not only representatives of the Finnish and Tartar races, but also Armenians, Circassians, Persians, Bokhariots, and other Orientals—a motley and picturesque but decidedly unsavory cargo.

However great the ethnographical variety on board may be, the traveler will probably find that four days on the Volga are quite enough for all practical and esthetic purposes, and instead of going on to Astrakhan he will quit the steamer at Tsaritsin. Here he will find a railway of about fifty miles in length, connecting the Volga with the Don. I say advisedly a railway, and not a train, for there are only two trains a week, so that if you lose one train you have to wait about three days for the next. Prudent, nervous people prefer traveling by the road; and they do well, for this line has, I believe, the undisputed honor of being the most infamous in Europe. But perhaps, after all, we ought to apply here the principle that all things are less dreadful than they seem. The strange jolts and mysterious noises may naturally alarm a person of nervous temperament, but a man of

ordinary nerve can easily preserve his equanimity, for the pace is so slow that running off the rails would be merely an amusing episode, and even a collision could scarcely be attended with serious consequences.

Some time after the arrival of the bi-weekly train at Kalatch, a steamer starts for Rostoff, which is situated near the mouth of the river. The navigation of the Don is much more difficult than that of the Volga. The river is extremely shallow, and the sand-banks are continually shifting, so that many times in the course of the day the steamer runs aground. Sometimes she is got off by simply reversing the engines, but not unfrequently she sticks so fast that the engines have to be assisted. This is effected in a curious way. The captain always gives a number of stalwart Cossacks a free passage on condition that they will give him the assistance he requires; and as soon as the ship sticks fast, he orders them to jump overboard with a stout hawser and haul her off! The task is not a pleasant one, especially as the poor fellows cannot afterwards change their clothes; but the order is always obeyed with alacrity and without grumbling. Cossacks, it would seem, have no personal acquaintance with colds and rheumatism.

In the most approved manuals of geography the Don figures as one of the principal European rivers; and its length and breadth give it a right to be considered as such, but its depth in many parts is ludicrously out of proportion to its length and breadth. I remember one day seeing the captain of a large, flat-bottomed steamer slacken speed, to avoid running down a man on horseback who was attempting to cross his bows in the middle of the stream. Another day a not less characteristic incident happened. A Cossack passenger wished to be set down at a place where there was no pier, and on being informed that there was no means of landing him, coolly jumped overboard and walked ashore. This simple method of disembarking cannot, of course, be recommended to those who have no special local knowledge regarding the exact position of sand-banks and deep pools.

Good serviceable fellows are those Cossacks who drag the steamer off the sand-banks, and well do they deserve a free passage. Both they and their richer companions who can afford to pay for tickets are agreeable, interesting fellow-travelers. Many of them can relate from their own experience, in plain, unvarnished style, stirring episodes of irregular warfare; and some of

the older men amongst them can add curious unpublished incidents of the Crimean War. If they happen to be in a very communicative mood they may divulge a few secrets regarding their simple, primitive commissariat system—of which I shall have occasion to speak hereafter. Whether they are confidential or not, the traveler who knows the language will spend his time more profitably and pleasantly in chatting with them than in gazing listlessly at the uninteresting country through which he is passing.

Unfortunately, these Don steamers carry a large number of free passengers of another and more objectionable kind, who do not confine themselves to the deck, but unceremoniously find their way into the cabin, and prevent thin-skinned travelers from sleeping. I know too little of Natural history to decide whether these agile, bloodthirsty parasites are of the same species as those which in England assist unofficially the Sanitary Commissioners by punishing uncleanness, but I may say that their function in the system of created things is essentially the same, and they fulfill it with a zeal and energy beyond all praise. Possessing for my own part a happy immunity from their indelicate attentions, and being perfectly innocent of entomological curiosity, I might, had I been alone, have overlooked their existence, but I was constantly reminded of their presence by less happily constituted mortals, and the complaints of the sufferers received a curious official confirmation. On arriving at the end of the journey, I asked permission to spend the night on board, and I noticed that the captain acceded to my request with a readiness and warmth not quite in keeping with his ordinary demeanor. Next morning the fact was fully explained. When I began to express my thanks for having been allowed to pass the night in a comfortable cabin, my host interrupted me with a good-natured laugh, and assured me that, on the contrary, he was under obligations to me. "You see," he said, assuming an air of mock gravity, "I have always on board a large body of light cavalry, and when I sleep alone in the cabin they make a combined attack on me; whereas, when some one shares the cabin with me, they always divide their forces. So, you see, you have unconsciously performed an heroic act, and laid me under a deep obligation." If this was, as I half suspected, merely an ingenious way of concealing hospitality, it must be admitted that it was *ben trovato*—a piece of elaborate politeness

to be expected from a Spanish hidalgo rather than from the captain of a Don steamer.

On certain steamers on the Sea of Azof the privacy of the sleeping-cabin is disturbed by still more objectionable intruders; I mean rats. During one short voyage which I made on board the *Kertch*, these disagreeable visitors became so importunate in the lower regions of the vessel that the ladies obtained permission to sleep in the deck-saloon. After this arrangement had been made, we unfortunate male passengers received redoubled attention from our tormentors. Awakened early one morning by the sensation of something running over me as I lay in my berth, I conceived a method of retaliation. It seemed to me possible that, in the event of another visit, I might, by seizing the proper moment, kick the rat up to the ceiling with such force as to produce concussion of the brain and instant death. Very soon I had an opportunity of putting my plan into execution. A significant shaking of the little curtain at the foot of the berth showed that it was being used as a scaling-ladder. I lay perfectly still, quite as much interested in the sport as if I had been waiting, rifle in hand, for big game. As if cognizant of my plan, and anxious to play creditably his part in the experiment, the rat stepped into my berth and took up his position on my foot. In an instant he was shot upward. First was heard a sharp knock on the ceiling, and then a dull "thud" on the floor. The precise extent of the injuries inflicted I never discovered, for the victim had sufficient strength and presence of mind to effect his escape; and the gentleman at the other side of the cabin, who had been roused by the noise, protested against my repeating the experiment, on the ground that, though he was willing to take his own share of the intruders, he strongly objected to having other people's rats kicked into his berth.

On such occasions it is of no use to complain to the authorities. When I met the captain on deck I related to him what had happened, and protested vigorously against passengers being exposed to such annoyances. After listening to me patiently, he coolly replied, entirely overlooking my protestations, "Ah! I did better than that this morning; I allowed my rat to get under the blanket, and then smothered him!"

Railways and steamboats, even when their arrangements leave much to be desired, invariably effect a salutary revolution in

hotel accommodation ; but this revolution is of necessity gradual. Foreign hotel-keepers must immigrate and give the example, suitable houses must be built ; servants must be properly trained ; and, above all, the native travelers must learn the usages of civilized society. In Russia this revolution is only in progress, and is as yet by no means complete. The cities where foreigners most do congregate—St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa—already possess hotels that will bear comparison with those of Western Europe, and some of the more important provincial towns can offer very respectable accommodation ; but there is still much to be done before the West-European can travel with comfort even on the principal routes. Cleanliness, the first and most essential element of comfort, as we understand the term, is still a rare commodity, and often cannot be procured at any price.

Even in good hotels, when they are of the genuine Russian type, there are certain peculiarities which, though not in themselves objectionable, strike a foreigner as peculiar. Thus, when you alight at such an hotel, you are expected to examine a considerable number of rooms, and to inquire about the respective prices. When you have fixed upon a suitable apartment, you will do well, if you wish to practice economy, to propose to the landlord considerably less than he demands ; and you will generally find, if you have a talent for bargaining, that the rooms may be hired for somewhat less than the sum first stated. You must be careful, however, to leave no possibility of doubt as to the terms of the contract. Perhaps you assume that, as in taking a cab a horse is always supplied without special stipulation, so in hiring a bedroom the bargain includes a bed and the necessary appurtenances. Such an assumption will not always be justified. The landlord may perhaps give you a bedstead without extra charge, but if he be uncorrupted by foreign notions, he will certainly not spontaneously supply you with bed-linen, pillows, blankets, and towels. On the contrary, he will assume that you carry all these articles with you, and if you do not, you must pay for those which you borrow from him.

This ancient custom has produced among certain Russians a curious kind of fastidiousness to which we are strangers. They strongly dislike using sheets, blankets, and towels which are in a certain sense public property, just as we should strongly object to putting on clothes which had been already worn by other people.

And the feeling may be developed in people not Russian by birth. For my own part, I confess to having been conscious of a certain disagreeable feeling on returning in this respect to the usages of so-called civilized Europe. Evidently fastidiousness is not an innate quality, but the result of the conditions to which we have been accustomed; and, as such, it may easily take very curious forms.

The inconvenience of carrying about these essential articles of bedroom furniture is by no means so great as may at first sight be supposed. Bedrooms in Russia are always heated during cold weather, so that one light blanket, which may be used also as a railway rug, is quite sufficient, whilst sheets, pillow-cases, and towels take up very little space in a portmanteau. The most cumbrous object is the pillow, for air-cushions, having always a disagreeable odor, are not well suited for the purpose. But Russians are accustomed to this incumbrance. In former days—as at the present time in those parts of the country where there are neither railways nor macadamized roads—people traveled in carts or carriages without springs, and in these instruments of torture a huge pile of cushions or pillows is necessary to avoid contusions and dislocations. On the railways—except perhaps the infamous line which connects the Volga with the Don—the jolts and shaking are not deadly enough to require such an antidote; but, even in unconservative Russia, customs outlive the conditions that created them; and at every railway-station you may see men and women carrying about their pillows with them as we carry wraps and hat-boxes. A genuine Russian merchant who loves comfort and respects tradition may travel without a portmanteau, but he considers his pillow as an indispensable *article de voyage*.

To return to the hotel. When you have completed the negotiations with the landlord, you will notice that, unless you have a servant with you, the waiter prepares to perform the duties of *valet de chambre*. Do not be surprised at his officiousness, which seems founded on the assumption that you are three-fourths paralyzed. Formerly, every well-born Russian had a valet always in attendance, and never dreamed of doing for himself anything which could by any possibility be done for him. You notice that there is no bell in the room, and no mechanical means of communicating with the world below stairs. That is because the attendant was supposed to be always within call, and it is so much

easier to shout than to get up and ring the bell. In the good old times all this was quite natural. The well-born Russian had commonly a superabundance of domestic serfs, and there was no reason why one or two of them should not accompany their master when his Honor undertook a journey. An additional person in the Tarantass did not increase the expense, and considerably diminished the little unavoidable inconveniences of travel. But times have changed. Fifteen years ago the domestic serfs were emancipated by Imperial Ukaz. Free servants demand wages; and on railways or steamers a single ticket does not include an attendant. The present generation must therefore get through life with a more modest supply of valets, and must learn to do with its own hands much that was formerly performed by serf labor. Still, a gentleman brought up in other conditions cannot be expected to dress himself without assistance, and accordingly the waiter remains in your room to act as valet. Perhaps, too, in the early morning you may learn in an unpleasant way that other parts of the old system are not yet extinct. You may hear, for instance, resounding along the corridors such an order as—"Petrusha! Petrusha!! Stakan vody!!!" ("Little Peter, little Peter, a glass of water!") shouted in a stentorian voice that would startle the Seven Sleepers.

When the toilet operations are completed, and you order tea—one always orders tea in Russia—you will be asked whether you have your own tea and sugar with you. If you are an experienced traveler you will be able to reply in the affirmative, for good tea can be bought only in certain well-known shops, and can never be found in hotels. A huge, steaming tea-urn, called a "Samovar"—etymologically, a "self-boiler"—will be brought in, and you will make your tea according to your taste. The tumbler, you know of course, is to be used as a cup, and when filled may be conveniently employed for cauterizing the points of your fingers. If you should happen to have anything eatable or drinkable in your traveling-basket, you need not hesitate to take it out at once, for the waiter will not feel at all aggrieved or astonished at your doing nothing "for the good of the house." The twenty or twenty-five *kopeks* that you pay for the Samovar—tea-pot, tumbler, saucer, spoon, and slop-basin being included under the generic term "Pribór"—frees you from all corkage and other dues.

These and similar remnants of old customs are now rapidly disappearing, and will, doubtless, in a very few years be things of the past—things to be picked up in out-of-the-way corners, and chronicled by social archæology; but they are still to be found in the best hotels in towns not unknown to Western Europe.

Many of these old customs, and especially the old method of traveling, may still be studied in all their pristine purity throughout a great part of the country. Though railway construction has been pushed forward with great energy during the last twenty years, the fire-horse has not yet crossed the Ural; and in what may be called Cis-Uralia, there are still vast regions—some of them larger than the United Kingdom—where the ancient solitudes have never been disturbed by the shrill whistle of the locomotive, and roads have remained in their primitive condition. Even in the central region one may still travel hundreds of miles without ever encountering anything that recalls the name of Macadam.

If popular rumor is to be trusted, there is somewhere in the Highlands of Scotland, by the side of a turnpike, a large stone bearing the following doggerel inscription:—

“If you had seen this road before it was made,
You'd lift up your hands and bless General Wade.”

Any educated Englishman reading this strange announcement would naturally remark that the expression, “a road before it is made,” is a logical contradiction probably of Hibernian origin; but I have often thought, during my wanderings in Russia, that the expression, if not logically justifiable, might for the sake of vulgar convenience be legalized by a Permissive Bill. The truth is that, as a Frenchman might say, “there are roads and roads”—roads made and roads unmade, roads artificial and roads natural. Now, in Russia, roads are nearly all of the unmade, natural kind, and are so conservative in their nature that they have at the present day precisely the same appearance as they had many centuries ago. They have thus for imaginative minds something of what is called “the charm of historical association.” The only perceptible change that takes place in them during a series of generations is that the ruts shift their position. When these become so deep that fore-wheels can no longer fathom them, it becomes necessary to begin making a new pair of ruts to the right or left

of the old ones ; and as the roads are commonly of gigantic breadth, there is no difficulty in finding a place for the operation. How the old ones get filled up I cannot explain ; but as I have never seen in any part of the country a human being engaged in road-repairing, I assume that beneficent Nature somehow accomplishes the task without human assistance, either by means of alluvial deposits, or by some other cosmical action best known to physical geographers.

On the roads one occasionally encounters bridges ; and here, again, I have discovered in Russia a key to the mysteries of Hibernian phraseology. Some years ago an Irish member declared to the House of Commons that the Church was "the bridge that separated the two great sections of the Irish people." As bridges commonly connect rather than separate, the metaphor was received with roars of laughter. If the honorable members who joined in the hilarious applause had traveled much in Russia, they would have been more moderate in their merriment ; for in that country bridges often act as a barrier rather than a connecting link, and to cross a river by a bridge is often what is termed in popular phrase "a tempting of Providence." The cautious driver will generally prefer to take to the water, if there is a ford within a reasonable distance, though both he and his human load may be obliged, in order to avoid getting wet feet, to assume undignified postures that would afford admirable material for the caricaturist. But this little bit of discomfort, even though the luggage should be soaked in the process of fording, is as nothing compared to the danger of crossing by the bridge. As I have no desire to harrow unnecessarily the feelings of the reader, I refrain from all description of ugly accidents, ending in bruises and fractures, and shall simply describe in a few words how a successful passage is effected.

When it is possible to approach the bridge without sinking up to the knees in mud, it is better to avoid all risks by walking over and waiting for the vehicle on the other side ; and when this is impossible, a preliminary survey is advisable. To your inquiries whether it is safe, your Yemstchik (post-boy) is sure to reply, "Nitchevo !"—a word which, according to the dictionaries, means "nothing," but which has, in the mouths of the peasantry, a great variety of meanings, as I may explain at some future time. In the present case it may be roughly translated, "There is no danger."

“Nitchevo, Barin, proyédem” (“There is no danger, sir; we shall get over”), he repeats. You may refer to the generally rotten appearance of the structure, and point in particular to the great holes sufficient to engulf half a post-horse. “Ne bos’, Bog pomozhet” (“Do not fear, God will help”), replies coolly your phlegmatic Jehu. You may have your doubts as to whether in this irreligious age Providence will intervene specially for your benefit; but your Yemstchik, who has more faith or fatalism, leaves you little time to solve the problem. Making hurriedly the sign of the cross, he gathers up his reins, waves his little whip in the air, and, shouting lustily, urges on his team. The operation is not wanting in excitement. First there is a short descent; then the horses plunge wildly through a zone of deep mud; next comes a fearful jolt, as the vehicle is jerked up on to the first planks; then the transverse planks, which are but loosely held in their places, rattle and rumble ominously, as the experienced, sagacious animals pick their way cautiously and gingerly among the dangerous holes and crevices; lastly, you plunge with a horrible jolt into a second mud zone, and finally regain *terra firma*, conscious of that pleasant sensation which a young officer may be supposed to feel after his first cavalry charge in real warfare.

Of course here, as elsewhere, familiarity breeds indifference. When you have successfully crossed without serious accident a few hundred bridges of this kind, you learn to be as cool and fatalistic as your Yemstchik.

The reader who has heard of the gigantic reforms that have been recently effected in Russia, may naturally be astonished to learn that the roads are still in such a disgraceful condition. But for this, as for everything else in the world, there is a good and sufficient reason. The country is still, comparatively speaking, thinly populated, and in many regions it is difficult, or practically impossible, to procure in sufficient quantity stone of any kind, and especially hard stone fit for road-making. Besides this, when roads are made, the severity of the climate renders it difficult to keep them in good repair.

When a long journey has to be undertaken through a region in which there are no railways, there are several ways in which it may be effected. In former days, when time was of still less value than at present, many landed proprietors traveled with their own horses, and carried with them, in one or more capacious, lumber-

ing vehicles, all that was required for the degree of civilization which they had attained; and their requirements were often considerable. The *grand seigneur*, for instance, who spent the greater part of his life amidst the luxury of the court society, naturally took with him all the portable elements of civilization. His baggage included, therefore, camp-beds, table-linen, silver plate, a *batterie de cuisine*, and a French cook. The pioneers and part of the commissariat force were always sent on in advance, so that his Excellency found at each halting-place everything prepared for his arrival. The poor owner of a few dozen serfs dispensed, of course, with the elaborate commissariat department, and contented himself with such modest fare as could be packed in the holes and corners of a single Tarantass.

It will be well to explain here, parenthetically, what a Tarantass is, for I shall often have occasion to use the word. It may be briefly defined as a phaeton without springs. The function of springs is imperfectly fulfilled by two parallel wooden bars, placed longitudinally, on which is fixed the body of the vehicle. It is commonly drawn by three horses—a strong, fast trotter in the shafts, flanked on each side by a light, loosely-attached horse that goes along at a gallop. The points of the shafts are connected by the “Duga,” which looks like a gigantic, badly-formed horseshoe rising high above the collar of the trotter. To the top of the Duga is attached the bearing-rein, and underneath the highest part of it is fastened a big bell—in the southern provinces I found two, and sometimes even three bells—which may often be distinctly heard a mile off. The use of the bell is variously explained. Some say it is in order to frighten the wolves, and others that it is to avoid collisions on the narrow forest paths. But neither of these explanations is entirely satisfactory. It is used chiefly in summer, when there is no danger of an attack from wolves; and the number of bells is greater in the south, where there are no forests. Perhaps the original intention was—I throw out the hint for the benefit of a certain school of archæologists—to frighten away evil spirits; and the practice has been retained partly from unreasoning conservatism, and partly with a view to lessen the chances of collisions. As the roads are noiselessly soft, and the drivers not always vigilant, the dangers of collision are considerably diminished by the ceaseless peal. Altogether, the Tarantass is well adapted to the conditions in which it is used. By the

curious way in which the horses are harnessed it recalls the war-chariot of ancient times. The horse in the shafts is compelled by the bearing-rein to keep his head high and straight before him—though the movement of his ears shows plainly that he would very much like to put it somewhere further away from the tongue of the bell—but the side horses gallop freely, turning their heads outwards in classical fashion. I believe that this position is assumed not from any sympathy on the part of these animals for the remains of classical art, but rather from the natural desire to keep a sharp eye on the driver. Every movement of his right hand they watch with close attention, and as soon as they discover any symptoms indicating an intention of using the whip, they immediately show a desire to quicken the pace.

Now that the reader has gained some idea of what a Tarantass is, we may return to the modes of traveling through the regions which are not yet supplied with railways.

However enduring and long-winded horses may be, they must be allowed sometimes, during a long journey, to rest and feed. Traveling with one's own horses is therefore necessarily a slow operation, and is already antiquated. People who value their time prefer to make use of the Imperial Post-organization. On all the principal lines of communication there are regular post-stations, at from ten to twenty miles apart, where a certain number of horses and vehicles are kept for the convenience of travelers. To enjoy the privileges of this arrangement, one has to apply to the proper authorities for a "*Podorozhnaya*"—a large sheet of paper stamped with the Imperial Eagle, and bearing the name of the recipient, the destination, and the number of horses to be supplied. In return for this document a small sum is paid for imaginary road-repairs; the rest of the sum is paid by installments at the respective stations. Armed with this document, you go to the post-station, and demand the requisite number of horses. Three is the number generally used, but if you travel lightly and are indifferent to appearances, you may modestly content yourself with a pair. The vehicle is a kind of Tarantass, but not such as I have just described. The essentials in both are the same, but those which the Imperial Government provides resemble an enormous cradle on wheels, rather than a phaeton. An armful of hay spread over the bottom of the wooden box is supposed to play the part of cushions. You are expected to sit under the

arched covering, and extend your legs so that the feet lie beneath the driver's seat ; but you will do well, unless the rain happens to be coming down in torrents, to get this covering unshipped, and travel without it. When used, it painfully curtails the little freedom of movement that you enjoy, and when you are shot upwards by some obstruction on the road, it is apt to arrest your ascent by giving you a violent blow on the top of the head.

It is to be hoped that you are in no hurry to start, otherwise your patience may be sorely tried. The horses, when at last produced, may seem to you the most miserable screws that it was ever your misfortune to behold ; but you had better refrain from expressing your feelings, for if you use violent, uncomplimentary language, it may turn out that you have been guilty of gross calumny. I have seen many a team composed of animals which a third-class London costermonger would have spurned, and in which it was barely possible to recognize the equine form, do their duty in highly creditable style, and go along at the rate of twelve or fourteen miles an hour, under no stronger incentive than the voice of the Yemstchik. Indeed, the capabilities of these lean, slouching, ungainly quadrupeds are often astounding when they are under the guidance of a man who knows how to drive them. Though such a man commonly carries a little harmless whip, he rarely uses it except by waving it horizontally in the air. His incitements are all oral. He talks to his cattle as he would to animals of his own species—now encouraging them by tender, caressing epithets, and now launching at them expressions of indignant scorn. At one moment they are his “little doves,” and at the next they have been transformed into “cursed hounds.” How far they understand and appreciate this curious mixture of endearing cajolery and contemptuous abuse it is difficult to say, but there is no doubt that it somehow has upon them a strange and powerful influence.

Any one who undertakes a journey of this kind should possess a well-knit, muscular frame and good tough sinews, capable of supporting an unlimited amount of jolting and shaking ; at the same time, he should be well inured to all the hardships and discomfort incidental to what is vaguely termed “roughing it.” When he wishes to sleep in a post-station, he will find nothing softer than a wooden bench, unless he can induce the keeper to put for him on the floor a bundle of hay, which is perhaps softer,

but on the whole more disagreeable than the deal board. Sometimes he will not get even the wooden bench, for in ordinary post-stations there is but one room for travelers, and the two benches—there are rarely more—may be already occupied. When he does obtain a bench, and succeeds in falling asleep, he must not be astonished if he is disturbed once or twice during the night by people who use the apartment as a waiting-room whilst the post-horses are being changed. These passers-by may even order a Samovar, and drink tea, chat, laugh, smoke, and make themselves otherwise disagreeable, utterly regardless of the sleepers. Then there are the other intruders, of which I have already spoken when describing the steamers on the Don. I must apologize to the reader for again introducing this disagreeable subject. *Æsthetically* it is a mistake, but I have no choice. My object is to describe traveling in Russia as it is, and any description which did not give due prominence to this species of discomfort would be untrue—like a description of Alpine climbing with no mention of glaciers. I shall refrain, however, from all details, and confine myself to a single hint for the benefit of future travelers. As you will have abundant occupation in the work of self-defense, learn to distinguish between belligerents and neutrals, and follow the simple principle of international law, that neutrals should not be molested. They may be very ugly, but ugliness does not justify assassination. If, for instance, you should happen in awaking to notice a few black or brown beetles running about your pillow, restrain your murderous hand! If you kill them you commit an act of unnecessary bloodshed; for though they may playfully scamper around you, they will do you no bodily harm.

The best lodgings to be found in some of the small provincial towns are much worse than the ordinary post-stations. To describe the filthiness and discomfort of some rooms in which I have had to spend the night, would require a much more powerful pen than mine; and even a powerful writer in entering on that subject would involuntarily make a special invocation for assistance to the Muse of the Naturalistic school.

Another requisite for a journey in unfrequented districts is a knowledge of the language. It is popularly supposed that if you are familiar with French and German, you may travel anywhere in Russia. So far as the great cities and chief lines of communication are concerned, this is true, but beyond that it is a delusion.

The Russian has not, any more than the West-European, received from Nature the gift of tongues. Educated Russians often speak one or two foreign languages fluently, but the peasants know no language but their own, and it is with the peasantry that one comes in contact. And to converse freely with the peasant requires a considerable familiarity with the language—far more than is required for simply reading a book. Though there are few provincialisms, and all classes of the people use the same words—except the words of foreign origin, which are used only by the upper classes—the peasant always speaks in a more laconic and more idiomatic way than the educated man.

In the winter months traveling is in some respects pleasanter than in summer, for snow and frost are great macadamizers. If the snow falls evenly, there is for some time the most delightful road that can be imagined. No jolts, no shaking, but a smooth, gliding motion, like that of a boat in calm water, and the horses gallop along as if totally unconscious of the sledge behind them. Unfortunately, this happy state of things does not last long. The road soon gets cut up, and deep transverse furrows are formed. How these furrows come into existence I have never been able clearly to comprehend, though I have often heard the phenomenon explained by men who imagined they understood it. Whatever the cause and mode of formation may be, certain it is that little hills and valleys do get formed, and the sledge, as it crosses over them, bobs up and down like a boat in a chopping sea, with this important difference, that the boat falls into a yielding liquid, whereas the sledge falls upon a solid substance, unyielding and unelastic. The shaking and jolting which result may readily be imagined.

There are other discomforts, too, in winter traveling. So long as the air is perfectly still, the cold may be very intense without being disagreeable; but if a strong head wind is blowing, and the thermometer ever so many degrees below zero, driving in an open sledge is a very disagreeable operation, and noses may get frost-bitten without their owners perceiving the fact in time to take preventive measures. Then why not take covered sledges on such occasions? For the simple reason that they are not to be had; and if they could be procured, it would be well to avoid using them, for they are apt to produce something very like sea-sickness. Besides this, when the sledge gets overturned, it is

pleasanter to be shot out on to the clean, refreshing snow than to be buried ignominiously under a pile of miscellaneous baggage.

The chief requisite for winter traveling in these icy regions is a plentiful supply of warm furs. An Englishman is very apt to be imprudent in this respect, and to trust too much to his natural power of resisting cold. To a certain extent this confidence is justifiable, for an Englishman often feels quite comfortable in an ordinary great-coat, when his Russian friends consider it necessary to envelop themselves in furs of the warmest kind; but it may be carried too far, in which case severe punishment is sure to follow, as I once learned by experience. I may relate the incident as a warning to others.

One day in the winter of 1870-71 I started from Novgorod, with the intention of visiting some friends at a cavalry barracks situated about ten miles from the town. As the sun was shining brightly, and the distance to be traversed was short, I considered that a light fur and a *bashlyk*—a cloth hood which protects the ears—would be quite sufficient to keep out the cold, and foolishly disregarded the warnings of a Russian friend who happened to call as I was about to start. Our route lay along the river due northward, right in the teeth of a strong north wind. A wintry north wind is always and everywhere a disagreeable enemy to face; let the reader try to imagine what it is when the Fahrenheit thermometer is at 30° below zero—or rather let him refrain from such an attempt, for the sensation produced cannot be imagined by those who have not experienced it. Of course I ought to have turned back—at least, as soon as a sensation of faintness warned me that the circulation was being seriously impeded—but I did not wish to confess my imprudence to the friend who accompanied me. When we had driven about three-fourths of the way, we met a peasant-woman, who gesticulated violently, and shouted something to us as we passed. I did not hear what she said, but my friend turned to me and said in an alarming tone—we had been speaking German—“Mein Gott! Ihre Nase ist abgefrohren!” Now the word “*abgefrohren*,” as the reader will understand, seemed to indicate that my nose was frozen off, so I put up my hand in some alarm to discover whether I had inadvertently lost the whole or part of the member referred to. So far from being lost or diminished in size, it was very much larger than usual, and at the same time as hard and insensible as a bit of wood.

"You may still save it," said my companion, "if you get out at once and rub it vigorously with snow."

I got out as directed, but was too faint to do anything vigorously. My fur cloak flew open, the cold seemed to grasp me in the region of the heart, and I fell insensible.

How long I remained unconscious I know not. When I awoke I found myself in a strange room, surrounded by dragoon officers in uniform, and the first words I heard were, "He is out of danger now, but he will have a fever."

These words were spoken, as I afterwards discovered, by a very competent surgeon; but the prophecy was not fulfilled. The promised fever never came. The only bad consequences were that for some days my right hand remained stiff, and during about a fortnight I had to conceal my nose from public view.

If this little incident justifies me in drawing a general conclusion, I should say that exposure to extreme cold is an almost painless form of death, but that the process of being resuscitated is very painful indeed—so painful, that the patient may be excused for momentarily regretting that officious people prevented the temporary insensibility from becoming "the sleep that knows no waking."

Between the alternate reigns of winter and summer there is always a short interregnum, during which traveling in Russia by road is almost impossible. Woe to the ill-fated mortal who has to make a long road-journey immediately after the winter snow has melted; or, worse still, at the beginning of winter, when the autumn mud has been petrified by the frost, and not yet leveled by the snow!

At all seasons the monotony of a journey is pretty sure to be broken by little unforeseen episodes of a more or less disagreeable kind. An axle breaks, or a wheel comes off, or there is a difficulty in procuring horses. As an illustration of the graver episodes which may occur, I shall make here a quotation from my diary.

Early in the morning we arrived at Maikop, a small town commanding the entrance to one of the valleys which run up towards the main range of the Caucasus. On alighting at the post-station, we at once ordered horses for the next stage, and received the laconic reply, "There are no horses."

"And when will there be some?"

‘To-morrow!’

This last reply we took for a piece of playful exaggeration, and demanded the book in which, according to law, the departure of horses is duly inscribed, and from which it is easy to calculate when the first team should be ready to start. A short calculation proved that we ought to get horses by four o'clock in the afternoon, so we showed the station-keeper various documents signed by the Minister of the Interior and other influential personages, and advised him to avoid all contravention of the postal regulations.

These documents, which proved that we enjoyed the special protection of the authorities, had generally been of great service to us in our dealings with rascally station-keepers; but this station-keeper was not one of the ordinary type. He was a Cossack, of herculean proportions, with a great bullet-shaped head, short-cropped bristly hair, shaggy eyebrows, an enormous pendent mustache, a defiant air, and a peculiar expression of countenance which plainly indicated “an ugly customer.” Though it was still early in the day, he had evidently already imbibed a considerable quantity of alcohol, and his whole demeanor showed clearly enough that he was not of those who are “pleasant in their liquor.” After glancing superciliously at the documents, as if to intimate he could read them were he so disposed, he threw them down on the table, and, thrusting his gigantic paws into his capacious trouser-pockets, remarked slowly and decisively, in something deeper than a double-bass voice, “You’ll have horses to-morrow morning.”

My traveling companion was a Russian gentleman of nervous, excitable temperament, who could handle with great dexterity that vocabulary of vituperation in which his native tongue is peculiarly rich; and our tormentor was a man who might have tried severely the patience of a Stoic philosopher. The scene which naturally ensued I leave to the reader’s imagination. Though my companion behaved, as the post-boys graphically described it, “like a General,” his words had no practical result; and we at last decided to content ourselves with making an entry in the Complaint Book, and hiring horses elsewhere.

When we imagined that we had overcome all obstacles, and were about to start, we encountered new and unexpected difficulties. As soon as Hercules perceived that we had obtained

horses without his assistance, he offered us one of his own teams, and refused to allow us to depart unless we consented to cancel the complaint which we had entered against him. This we declined to do, and the wordy warfare began afresh with redoubled fury.

Perceiving that at any moment words might give place to something more deadly, I took my friend aside, and tried to convince him that prudence was the better part of valor. I represented to him that a revolver should never be used except in the direst necessity, and that in the present case a hand-to-hand fight should be by all means avoided. Our opponent, I said, was evidently no pugilist, and knew nothing of "striking straight from the shoulder"—for this latter expression I could find no Russian equivalent, and had to supply the deficiency by pantomime—so that if he had been a man of ordinary proportions, a few rounds might have been a pleasant amusement; but under the circumstances either of us would look like David in the presence of Goliath. In a small room Goliath could easily close with his antagonist, and then would inevitably happen something which would give rise to a judicial investigation, and end in a verdict of "Instantaneous death through violent compression." Besides this, our enemy had at his disposal a legion of post-boys and strappers, and could accordingly overwhelm us with numbers. Plainly we were the weaker party, and therefore would do well to show ourselves law-loving respecters of the national institutions. In accordance with these considerations, we determined to apply to the chief of rural police, who was at that moment in the town.

It was arranged that my friend should mount guard over the baggage, whilst I went in search of the police officer. As I was about to start, my friend suggested that I should leave with him my revolver. To this I objected, for I feared that he might, in his excitement, make an imprudent use of it; but he assured me that he would avoid all quarreling till my return; and I acceded to his request. Very soon I had reason to regret this step. On returning from my errand, I found a crowd round the post-station, and a general hubbub, that indicated only too plainly that the decisive action was going on, or had been fought in my absence. Fearing the worst, I rushed into the room. The smoke and the smell of gunpowder showed that the artillery had been used, but there was now a deathlike silence. When my eyes had become a

little accustomed to the smoky darkness, I could perceive a confused heap of furniture and baggage on the floor, but happily there was no human form among the *débris*. In the one corner stood Goliath, with two companions at his side, and in the other stood my friend, disarmed. Evidently for the moment there was an armistice.

In a few minutes all the authorities in the place had assembled. The table had to be set on its legs, a candle had been lit, two armed Cossacks stood as sentries at the door, and the preliminary investigation had commenced. The chief of the police sat at the table, and wrote rapidly on a sheet of foolscap paper. The investigation showed that two shots had been fired from my revolver, and two bullets were found deeply imbedded in the wall. All those who had been present at the scuffle, and many more who knew nothing about it except by hearsay, were duly examined, and a good deal of informal mutual recrimination was exchanged. More than once the ominous words, "*pokushenié na ubiistvo*" ("attempt to murder"), were pronounced, and my friend was assumed to be the assailant, in spite of his protestations to the contrary. Things looked very black indeed. We had the prospect of being detained in this miserable place for days and weeks, till the insatiable demon of official formality had been fully propitiated. And then?—I did not like to think of that question.

When things were thus at their blackest they suddenly took a most unexpected turn, and the *deus ex machina* appeared precisely at the right moment, just as if we had all been puppets in a sensation novel. The noise of wheels and the clatter of hoofs were suddenly heard in the usual approved style, and in a few minutes a gentleman entered who happened to be the official investigator into criminal affairs—what is called in French procedure the *juge d'instruction*. He was accidentally passing through the village, and had stopped to change horses. Instead of a few minutes' rest, as he had expected, he found a heavy bit of work. Fortunately for us, he was equal to the occasion. Unlike the majority of Russian officials, he was no friend of lengthy procedure, and contrived, with the help of a few cigarettes, to make the case quite clear in a very short time. There was here, he explained, no case of attempt to murder, or anything of the kind. My friend had been attacked by the station-keeper and his two assistants, who

had no right to be in the travelers' room, and he had fired the revolver to frighten his assailants and bring assistance.

"A Daniel! yea, a Daniel!" I muttered to myself, as I heard this explanation. My surprise was excited not by the ingenuity of the decision, which was nothing more than a simple statement of what had really taken place, but by the fact that a man who was at once a lawyer and a Russian official, should have been able to take such a plain, common-sense view of the case!

Before midnight we were once more free men, driving rapidly in the clear moonlight to the next station, under the escort of a fully-armed Circassian Cossack; but the idea that we might have been detained for weeks in that miserable place long haunted us like a nightmare.

CHAPTER II.

IN THE NORTHERN FORESTS.

Bird's-eye View of Russia—The Northern Forests—Purpose of my Journey
—Negotiations—The Road—A Village—Peasant's House—Vapor-Baths
—Curious Custom—Arrival.

THERE are many ways of describing a country that one has visited. The simplest and most common method is to give a chronological account of the journey; and this is perhaps the best way when the journey does not extend over more than a few weeks. But it cannot be conveniently employed in the case of a residence of several years. Did I adopt it, I should very soon exhaust the reader's patience. I should have to take him with me to a secluded village, and make him wait for me till I had learned to speak the language. Thence he would have to accompany me to a provincial town, and spend months in a public office, whilst I endeavored to master the mysteries of local self-government. After this he would have to spend nearly two years with me in a big library, where I studied the history and literature of the country. And so on and so on. Even my journeys would prove tedious to him, as they have often been to myself, for he would have to drive with me many a score of weary miles, where even the most zealous diary-writer would find little to record beyond the names of the post-stations.

It will be well for me, then, to avoid the strictly chronological method, and confine myself to a description of the more striking objects and incidents that came under my notice. The knowledge which I derived from books will help me to supply a running commentary on what I happened to see and hear.

Instead of beginning in the usual way with St. Petersburg, I prefer for many reasons to leave the description of the capital till some future time, and plunge at once into the great northern forest region.

If it were possible to get a bird's-eye view of European Russia, the spectator would perceive that the country is composed of two halves, widely differing from each other in character. The northern half is a land of forest and morass, plentifully supplied with water in the form of rivers, lakes, and marshes, and broken up by numerous patches of cultivation. The southern half is, as it were, the other side of the pattern—an immense expanse of rich arable land, broken up by occasional patches of sand or forest. The imaginary undulating line separating those two regions starts from the western frontier about the 50th parallel of latitude, and runs in a north-easterly direction till it enters the Ural range at about 56° N.L.

Well do I remember my first experience of travel in the northern region, and the weeks of voluntary exile which formed the goal of the journey. My reason for undertaking the journey was this : a few months of life in St. Petersburg had fully convinced me that the Russian language is one of those things which can only be acquired by practice, and that even a person of antediluvian longevity might spend all his life in that city without learning to express himself fluently in the vernacular—especially if he has the misfortune of being able to speak French and German. With his friends and associates he speaks French or English. German serves as a medium of communication with waiters and other people of that class. It is only with *Isvoshtchiki*—the drivers of the little open droskies which fulfill the function of cabs—that he is obliged to use the native tongue, and with them a very limited vocabulary suffices. The ordinal numerals and four short, easily-acquired expressions—*poshol* (go on), *na pravo* (to the right), *ma lyevo* (to the left), and *stoi* (stop)—are all that is required.

Whilst I was considering how I could get beyond the sphere of West-European languages, a friend came to my assistance, and suggested that I should go to his estate in the province of Novgorod, where I should find an intelligent, amiable parish priest, quite innocent of any linguistic acquirements. This proposal I at once adopted, and accordingly found myself one morning at a small station of the Moscow Railway, endeavoring to explain to a peasant in sheep's clothing that I wished to be conveyed to Ivánofka, the village where my future teacher lived. At that time I still spoke Russian in a very fragmentary and confused way—pretty much as Spanish cows are popularly supposed to speak

French. My first remark therefore, being literally interpreted, was—"Ivánofka. Horses. You can?" The point of interrogation was expressed by a simultaneous raising of the voice and the eyebrows.

"Ivánofka?" said the peasant, in an interrogatory tone of voice. In Russia, as in other countries, the peasantry when speaking with strangers like to repeat questions, apparently for the purpose of gaining time.

"Ivánofka," I replied.

"Now?"

"Now!"

After some reflection the peasant nodded and said something which I did not understand, but which I assumed to mean that he was open to consider proposals for transporting me to my destination.

"Roubles. How many?"

To judge by the knitting of the brows and the scratching of the head, I should say that that question gave occasion to a very abstruse mathematical calculation. Gradually the look of concentrated attention gave place to an expression such as children assume when they endeavor to get a parental decision reversed by means of coaxing. Then came a stream of soft words which were to me utterly unintelligible.

"How many?" I repeated.

"Ten!" said the peasant, in a hesitating, apologetic way, as if he were more than half-ashamed of what he was saying.

"Ten!" I exclaimed, indignantly. "Two, enough!" and waving my hand to indicate that I should be no party to such a piece of extortion, I re-entered the station. As I reached the door I heard him say, "Master, master! Eight!" But I took no notice of the proposal.

I must not weary the reader with a detailed account of the succeeding negotiations, which were conducted with extreme diplomatic caution on both sides, as if a cession of territory or the payment of a war-contribution had been the subject of discussion. Three times he drove away and three times returned. Each time he abated his pretensions, and each time I slightly increased my offer. At last, when I began to fear that he had finally taken his departure and had left me to my own devices, he re-entered the

room and took up my baggage, indicating thereby that he agreed to my last offer.

The sum agreed upon—four roubles—would have been, under ordinary circumstances, more than sufficient for the distance, which was only about twenty miles ; but before proceeding far I discovered that the circumstances were by no means ordinary, and I began to understand the pantomimic gesticulation which had puzzled me during the negotiations. Heavy rain had fallen without interruption for several days, and now the track on which we were traveling could not, without poetical license, be described as a road. In some parts it resembled a water-course, in others a quagmire, and at least during the first half of the journey I was constantly reminded of that stage in the work of creation when the water was not yet separated from the dry land. During the few moments when the work of keeping my balance and preventing my baggage from being lost did not engross all my attention, I speculated on the possibility of constructing a boat-carriage, to be drawn by a swift-footed hippopotamus, or some other animal that feels itself at home equally on land and in water. On the whole, the project seemed to me then as useful and as feasible as Fourrier's idea of making whales play the part of tug-steamers.

Fortunately for us, our two lean, wiry little horses did not object to being used as aquatic animals. They took the water bravely, and plunged through the mud in gallant style. The *telega* in which we were seated—a four-wheeled skeleton cart—did not submit to the ill-treatment so silently. It creaked out its remonstrances and entreaties, and at the more difficult spots threatened to go to pieces ; but its owner understood its character and capabilities, and paid no attention to its ominous threats. Once, indeed, a wheel came off, but it was soon fished out of the mud and replaced, and no further casualty occurred.

The horses did their work so well that, when about mid-day we arrived at a village, I could not refuse to let them have some rest and refreshment—all the more as my own thoughts had begun to turn in that direction.

The village, as villages in that part of the country generally, consisted of two long parallel rows of wooden houses. The road—if a stratum of mud more than a foot in depth can be called by that name—formed the intervening space. All the houses turned their gables to the road, and some of them had pretensions to

architectural decoration in the form of rude perforated wood-work. Between the houses, and in a line with them, were great wooden gates and high wooden fences, separating the court-yards from the road. Into one of these yards, near the further end of the village, our horses turned of their own accord.

“An inn?” I said, in an interrogative tone.

The driver shook his head and said something, in which I detected the word “friend.” Evidently there was no hostelry for man and beast in the village, and the driver was using a friend’s house for the purpose.

The yard was flanked on the one side by an open shed, containing rude agricultural implements which might throw some light on the agriculture of the primitive Aryans, and on the other side by the dwelling-house and stable. Both the house and stable were built of logs, nearly cylindrical in form, and placed in horizontal tiers.

Two of the strongest of human motives, hunger and curiosity, impelled me to enter the house at once. Without waiting for an invitation, I went up to the door—half protected against the winter snows by a small open portico—and unceremoniously walked in. The first apartment was empty, but I noticed a low door in the wall to the left, and passing through this, entered the principal room. As the scene was new to me, I noted the principal objects. In the wall before me were two small square windows looking out upon the road, and in the corner to the right, nearer to the ceiling than to the floor, was a little triangular shelf, on which stood a religious picture. Before the picture hung a curious oil lamp. In the corner to the left of the door was a gigantic stove, built of brick, and whitewashed. From the top of the stove to the wall on the right stretched what might be called an enormous shelf, six or eight feet in breadth. This is the so-called *palati*, as I afterwards discovered, and serves as a bed for part of the family. The furniture consisted of a long wooden bench attached to the wall on the right, a big, heavy deal table, and a few wooden stools.

Whilst I was leisurely surveying these objects I heard a noise on the top of the stove, and, looking up, perceived a human face, with long hair parted in the middle, and a full yellow beard. I was considerably astonished by this apparition, for the air in the room was stifling, and I had some difficulty in believing that any created being—except perhaps a salamander or a negro—could

exist in such a position. I looked hard to convince myself that I was not the victim of a delusion. As I stared, the head nodded slowly and pronounced the customary form of greeting.

I returned the greeting slowly, wondering what was to come next.

"Ill, very ill!" sighed the head.

"I'm not astonished at that," I remarked, in an "aside." "If I were where you are I should be very ill too."

"Hot, very hot?" I remarked, interrogatively.

"Nitchevo"—that is to say, "not particularly." This remark astonished me all the more, as I noticed at that very moment that the body to which the head belonged was enveloped in a sheep-skin!

After living some time in Russia I was no longer surprised by such incidents, for I soon discovered that the Russian peasant has a marvelous power of bearing extreme heat as well as extreme cold. When a coachman takes his master or mistress to the theater or to a party, he never thinks of going home and returning at an appointed time. Hour after hour he sits placidly on the box, and though the cold be of an intensity such as is never experienced in our temperate climate, he can sleep as tranquilly as the lazzarone at mid-day in Naples. In that respect the Russian peasant seems to be first-cousin to the polar bear, but, unlike the animals of the arctic regions, he is not at all incommoded by excessive heat. On the contrary, he likes it when he can get it, and never omits an opportunity of laying in a reserve supply of caloric. He even delights in rapid transitions from one extreme to the other, as is amply proved by a curious custom which deserves to be recorded.

The reader must know that in the life of the Russian peasantry the weekly vapor-bath plays a most important part. It has even a certain religious signification, for no good orthodox peasant would dare to enter a church after being soiled by certain kinds of pollution without cleansing himself physically and morally by means of the bath. In the weekly arrangements it forms the occupation for Saturday afternoon, and care is taken to avoid thereafter all pollution until after the morning service on Sunday. Many villages possess a public or communal bath of the most primitive construction, but in some parts of the country—I am not sure how far the practice extends—the peasants take their

vapor-bath in the household oven in which the bread is baked ! In all cases the operation is pushed to the extreme limit of human endurance—far beyond the utmost limit that can be endured by those who have not been accustomed to it from childhood. For my own part, I only made the experiment once ; and when I informed my attendant that my life was in danger from congestion of the brain, he laughed outright, and told me that the operation had only begun. Most astounding of all—and this brings me to the fact which led me into this digression—the peasants in winter often rush out of the bath and roll themselves in snow ! This aptly illustrates a common Russian proverb, which says that what is health to the Russian is death to the German.

Cold water, as well as hot vapor, is sometimes used as a means of purification. In the villages the old pagan habit of dressing in absurd disguises at certain seasons—as is done during the Carnival in Roman Catholic countries with the approval, or at least connivance, of the Church—still survives, but it is regarded as not altogether sinless. He who uses such disguises places himself to a certain extent under the influence of the Evil One, thereby putting his soul in jeopardy ; and to free himself from this danger he has to purify himself in the following way. When the ceremony of blessing the waters is performed, by breaking a hole in the ice and dipping with certain religious rites a cross into the water, he should plunge into the hole as soon as possible after the ceremony. I remember once at Yaroslaff on the Volga, two young peasants successfully accomplished this feat—though the police, it was said, had orders to prevent it—and escaped, apparently without evil consequences, though the Fahrenheit thermometer was below zero. How far this curious custom has really a purifying influence, is a question which must be left to theologians ; but even an ordinary mortal may justifiably assume that, if it be regarded as a penance, it must have a certain deterrent effect. The man or woman who foresees the necessity of undergoing this severe penance will think twice before putting on a disguise. So at least it must have been in the good old times, but in these degenerate days—among the Russian peasantry as elsewhere—the fear of the Devil, which was formerly, if not the beginning, at least one of the essential elements, of wisdom, has greatly decreased. Many a young peasant will now thoughtlessly disguise himself, and when the consecration of the water is per-

formed, will stand and look on passively like an ordinary spectator ! It would seem that the Devil, like his enemy the Pope, is destined to lose gradually his temporal power.

But all this time I am neglecting my new acquaintance on the top of the stove. In reality I did not neglect him, but listened most attentively to every word of the long tale that he recited. What it was all about I could only vaguely guess, for I did not understand more than five per cent. of the words used, but I assumed from the tone and gestures that he was relating to me all the incidents and symptoms of his illness. And a very severe illness it must have been, for it requires a very considerable amount of physical suffering to make the patient Russian peasant groan. Before he had finished his tale a woman entered, apparently his wife. To her I explained that I had a strong desire to eat and drink, and that I wished to know what she could give me. By a good deal of laborious explanation I was made to understand that I could have eggs, black bread, and butter ; and we agreed that there should be a division of labor : my hostess should prepare the Samovar for boiling water, whilst I should fry the eggs to my own satisfaction.

In a few minutes the repast was ready, and, though not very delicate, was highly acceptable. The tea and sugar I had of course brought with me ; the eggs were not very highly flavored ; and the black rye-bread, strongly intermixed with sand, could be eaten by a peculiar and easily-acquired method of mastication, in which the upper molars were never allowed to touch those of the lower jaw. In this way the grating of the sand between the teeth was avoided. The butter alone was a failure ; though strongly recommended by the good housewife, it could not be put to any practical use, for the simple reason that it was impossible to sit in the same room with it. The milk, however, which was offered to me in an earthenware pitcher, was very palatable.

Eggs, black bread, milk, and tea—these formed my ordinary articles of food during all my wanderings in Northern Russia. Occasionally potatoes could be got, and afforded the possibility of varying the bill of fare. The favorite materials employed in the native cookery are sour cabbage, cucumbers, and kvass—a kind of very small beer made from black bread. None of these can be recommended to the traveler who is not already accustomed to them.

The remainder of the journey was accomplished at a rather more

rapid pace than the preceding part, for the road was decidedly better, though it was traversed by numerous half-buried roots, which produced violent jolts. From the conversation of the driver I gathered that wolves, bears, and elks were found in the forest through which we were passing.

The sun had long since set when we reached our destination, and I found to my dismay that the priest's house was closed for the night. To rouse the reverend personage from his slumbers, and endeavor to explain to him with my limited vocabulary the object of my visit, was not to be thought of. On the other hand, there was no inn of any kind in the vicinity. When I consulted the driver what was to be done, he meditated for a little, and then pointed to a large house at some distance where there were still lights. It turned out to be the country house of the gentleman who had advised me to undertake the journey, and here, after a short explanation, I was hospitably received.

It had been my intention to live in the priest's house, but a short interview with him on the following day convinced me that that part of my plan could not be carried out. The preliminary objections that I should find but poor fare in his humble household, and much more of the same kind, were at once put aside by my assurance that, as an old traveler, I was well accustomed to simple fare, and could always accommodate myself to the habits of people among whom my lot happened to be cast. But there was a more serious difficulty. The priest's family had, as is generally the case with priests' families, been rapidly increasing during the last few years, and his house had not been growing with equal rapidity. The natural consequence of this was that he had not a room or a bed to spare. The little room which he had formerly kept for occasional visitors was now occupied by his eldest daughter, who had returned from a "school for the daughters of the clergy," where she had been for the last two years. Under these circumstances, I was constrained to accept the kind proposal made to me by the representative of my absent friend, that I should take up my quarters in one of the numerous unoccupied rooms in the manor-house. This arrangement, I was reminded, would not at all interfere with my proposed studies, for the priest lived close at hand, and I might spend with him as much time as I liked.

And now let me introduce the reader to my reverend teacher, and one or two other personages whose acquaintance I made during my voluntary exile.

CHAPTER III.

VOLUNTARY EXILE.

Ivánofka—History of the Place—The Steward of the Estate—Slavonian and Teutonic Natures—A German's View of the Emancipation—Justices of the Peace—New School of Morals—The Russian Language—Linguistic Talent of the Russians—My Teacher—A Big Dose of Current History.

THIS village, Ivánofka by name, in which I proposed to spend some months, was rather more picturesque than villages in these northern forests commonly are. The peasants' huts, built on both sides of a straight road, were colorless enough, and the big church, with its five pear-shaped cupolas rising out of the bright green roof and its ugly belfry in the Renaissance style, was not by any means beautiful in itself; but when seen from a little distance, especially in the soft evening twilight, the whole might have been made the subject of a very pleasing picture. From the point which a landscape-painter would naturally have chosen, the foreground was formed by a meadow, through which flowed sluggishly a meandering stream. On a bit of rising ground to the right, and half concealed by an intervening cluster of old rich-colored pines, stood the manor-house—a big, box-shaped, whitewashed building, with a veranda in front, overlooking a small plot that might some day become a flower-garden. To the left of this stood the village, the houses grouping prettily with the big church, and a little further in this direction was an avenue of graceful birches. On the extreme left were fields, bounded by a dark border of fir-trees. Could the spectator have raised himself a few hundred feet from the ground, he would have seen that there were fields beyond the village, and that the whole of this agricultural oasis was imbedded in a forest stretching in all directions as far as the eye could reach.

The history of the place may be told in a few words. In former times the estate, including the village and all its inhabitants, had

belonged to a monastery, but when the church lands were secularized by Catherine II., in 1764, it became the property of the State. Some years afterwards the Empress granted it, with the serfs and everything else which it contained, to an old general who had distinguished himself in the Turkish wars. From that time it had remained in the K—— family. Some time between the years 1820 and 1840, the big church and the mansion-house had been built by the father of the actual possessor, who loved country life, and devoted a large part of his time and energies to the management of his estate. His son, on the contrary, preferred St. Petersburg to the country, served in one of the public offices, loved passionately French plays and other products of urban civilization, and left the entire management of the property to a German steward, popularly known as Karl Karl'itch, whom I shall introduce to the reader presently.

The village annals contained no important events, except bad harvests, cattle-plagues, and destructive fires, with which the inhabitants seem to have been periodically visited from time immemorial. If good harvests were ever experienced, they must have faded from the popular recollection. Then there were certain ancient traditions which might have been lessened in bulk and improved in quality by being subjected to searching historical criticism. More than once, for instance, a *Leshie*, or wood-sprite, had been seen in the neighborhood; and in several households the *Domovoi*, or Brownie, had been known to play strange pranks until he was properly propitiated. And as a set-off against these manifestations of evil powers, there were well-authenticated stories about a miracle-working image that had mysteriously appeared on the branch of a tree, and about numerous miraculous cures that had been effected by means of pilgrimages to holy shrines.

But it is time to introduce the principal personages of this little community. Of these, by far the most important—*facile princeps*, as a lover of Latinity would say—was Karl Karl'itch, the steward.

First of all I ought, perhaps, to explain how Karl Schmidt, the son of a well-to-do *Bauer* in the Prussian village of Schönhausen, became Karl Karl'itch, the principal personage in the Russian village of Ivánofka.

About twenty years ago, many of the Russian landed proprietors had become alive to the necessity of improving the primitive, traditional method of agriculture, and sought for this purpose

German stewards for their estates. Among these proprietors was the owner of Ivánofka. Through the medium of a friend in Berlin, he succeeded in engaging for a moderate salary a young man who had just finished his studies in one of the German schools of agriculture—the institution at Hohenheim, if my memory does not deceive me. This young man had arrived in Russia as plain Karl Schmidt, but his name was soon transformed into Karl Karl'itch, not from any desire of his own, but in accordance with a curious Russian custom. In Russia, one usually calls a man not by his family name, but by his Christian name and patronymic—the latter being formed from the name of his father. Thus, if a man's name is Nicholas, and his father's Christian name is—or was—Ivan, you address him as Nikolaï Ivánovitch (pronounced Iván'itch); and if this man should happen to have a sister called Mary, you will address her—even though she should be married—as Marya Ivánovna (pronounced Ivanna).

Immediately on his arrival, young Schmidt had set himself vigorously to re-organize the estate and improve the method of agriculture. Some plows, harrows, and other implements which had been imported at a former period were dragged out of the obscurity in which they had lain for several years, and an attempt was made to farm on scientific principles. The attempt was far from being completely successful, for the serfs could not be made to work like regularly-trained German laborers. In spite of all admonitions, threats, and punishments, they persisted in working slowly, listlessly, inaccurately, and occasionally they broke the new instruments, from carelessness or some more culpable motive. Karl Karl'itch was not naturally a hard-hearted man, but he was very rigid in his notions of duty, and could be cruelly severe when his orders were not executed with an accuracy and punctuality that seemed to the Russian rustic mind mere useless pedantry. The serfs did not offer him any open opposition, and were always obsequiously respectful in their demeanor towards him, but they invariably frustrated his plans by their carelessness and stolid passive resistance. Thus arose that silent conflict and that smouldering mutual enmity that almost always result from the contact of Teutonic with Slavonian natures. The serfs instinctively regretted the good old times, when they lived under the rough and ready patriarchal rule of their master, assisted by a native "Burmister," or overseer, who was one of themselves. The Burmister

had not been always honest in his dealings with them, and the master had often, when in anger, ordered severe punishments to be inflicted ; but the Burmister had not attempted to make them change their old habits, and had shut his eyes to many little sins of omission and commission, whilst the master was always ready to assist them in difficulties, and commonly treated them in a kindly, familiar way. As the old Russian proverb has it, "Where anger is, there too is kindly forgiveness." Karl Karl'itch, on the contrary, was the personification of uncompassionate, inflexible law. Blind rage and compassionate kindness were alike foreign to his system of government. If he had any feeling towards the serfs, it was one of chronic contempt. The word *Durák* (block-head) was constantly on his lips, and when any bit of work was well done, he took it as a matter of course, and never thought of giving a word of approval or encouragement.

When it became evident, in 1859, that the emancipation of the serfs was at hand, Karl Karl'itch confidently predicted that the country would inevitably go to ruin. He knew by experience that the peasants were lazy and improvident, even when they lived under the tutelage of a master, and with the fear of the rod before their eyes. What would they become when this guidance and salutary restraint would be removed ? The prospect raised terrible forebodings in the mind of the worthy steward, who had his employer's interests really at heart ; and these forebodings were considerably increased and intensified when he learned that the peasants were to receive by law the land which they occupied on sufferance, and which comprised about a half of the whole arable land of the estate. This arrangement he declared to be a dangerous and unjustifiable infraction of the sacred rights of property, which savored strongly of communism and could have but one practical result : the emancipated peasants would live by the cultivation of their own land, and would not consent on any terms to work for their former master. In the few months which immediately followed the publication of the Emancipation Edict, he found much to confirm his most gloomy apprehensions. The peasants showed themselves dissatisfied with the privileges conferred upon them, and sought to evade the corresponding duties imposed on them by the new law. In vain he endeavored, by exhortations, promises, and threats, to get the most necessary part of the field work done, and showed the peasants the provision

of the law enjoining them to obey and work as of old until some new arrangement should be made. To all his appeals they replied that they were no longer obliged to work for their former master; and he was at last forced to appeal to the authorities. This step had a certain effect, but the field work was executed that year even worse than usual, and the harvest suffered in consequence.

Since that time things had gradually improved. The peasants had discovered that they could not support themselves and pay their taxes from the land ceded to them, and had accordingly consented to till the proprietors' fields for a moderate compensation. "These two years," said Karl Karl'itch to me, with an air of honest self-satisfaction, "I have been able, after paying all expenses, to transmit little sums to the young master in St. Petersburg. It was certainly not much, but it shows that things are better than they were. Still, it is hard, uphill work. The peasants have not been improved by liberty. They now work less and drink more than they did in the times of serfage, and if you say a word to them they'll go away, and not work for you at all." Here Karl Karl'itch indemnified himself for his recent self-control in the presence of his workers by using a series of the strongest epithets which the combined languages of his native and of his adopted country could supply. "But laziness and drunkenness are not their only faults. They let their cattle wander into our fields, and never lose an opportunity of stealing firewood from the forest."

"But you have now for such matters the rural justices of the peace," I ventured to suggest.

"The justices of the peace!" Here Karl Karl'itch used an inelegant expression, which showed plainly that he was no unqualified admirer of the new judicial institutions. "What is the use of applying to the justices? The nearest one lives six miles off, and when I go to him he evidently tries to make me lose as much time as possible. I am sure to lose nearly a whole day, and at the end of it I may find that I have got nothing for my pains. These justices always try to find some excuse for the peasant, and when they do condemn, by way of exception, the affair does not end there. There are constantly a number of pettifogging practitioners prowling about—for the most part rascally scribes who have been dismissed from the public offices for pilfering and extorting too openly—and they are always ready to whisper to the peasant that he should appeal. The

peasant knows that the decision is just, but he is easily persuaded that by appealing to the Monthly Sessions he gets another draw in the lottery, and may perhaps draw a prize. He lets the rascally scribe, therefore, draw up an appeal for him, and I receive an invitation to attend the Session of Justices in the district town on a certain day. It is a good five-and-thirty miles to the district town, as you know, but I get up early, and arrive at eleven o'clock, the hour stated in the official notice. A crowd of peasants are hanging about the door of the court, but the only official present is the porter. I inquire of him when my case is likely to come on, and receive the laconic answer, 'How should I know?' After half an hour the secretary arrives. I repeat my question, and receive the same answer. Another half-hour passes, and one of the justices drives up in his tarantass. Perhaps he is a glib-tongued gentleman, and assures me that the proceedings will commence at once: 'Sei tehas! sei tehas!' Don't believe what the priest or the dictionary tells you about the meaning of that expression. The dictionary will tell you that it means 'immediately,' but that's all nonsense. In the mouth of a Russian it means 'in an hour,' 'next week,' 'in a year or two,' 'never,'—most commonly 'never.' Like many other words in Russian, 'sei tehas' can be understood only after long experience. A second justice drives up, and then a third. No more are required by law, but these gentlemen must first smoke several cigarettes and discuss all the local news before they begin work. At last they take their seats on the bench—a slightly-elevated platform at one end of the room—behind a table covered with green baize, and the proceedings commence. My case is sure to be pretty far down on the list—the secretary takes, I believe, a malicious pleasure in watching my impatience—and before it is called the justices have to retire at least once for refreshments and cigarettes. I have to amuse myself by listening to the other cases, and some of them, I can assure you, are amusing enough. The walls of that room must be by this time pretty well saturated with perjury, and many of the witnesses catch at once the infection. Perhaps I may tell you some other time a few of the amusing incidents that I have seen there. At last my case is called. It is as clear as daylight, but the rascally pettifogger is there with a long prepared speech. He holds in his hand a small volume of the codified law, and quotes paragraphs which no amount of human ingenuity can make to

bear upon the subject. Perhaps the previous decision is confirmed ; perhaps it is reversed ; in either case, I have lost a second day and exhausted more patience than I can conveniently spare. And something even worse may happen, as I know by experience. Once during a case of mine there was some little informality—some one inadvertently opened the door of the consulting-room when the decision was being written, or some other little incident of the sort occurred, and the rascally pettifogger complained to the Supreme Court of Revision, which is a part of the Senate. The case was all about a few roubles, but it was discussed in St. Petersburg, and afterwards tried over again by another court of justices. Now, I have paid my *lehrgeld*, and go no more to law.”

“Then you must expose yourself to all kinds of extortion ?”

“Not so much as you might imagine. I have my own way of dispensing justice. When I catch a peasant’s horse or cow in our fields, I lock it up and make the owner pay a ransom.”

“Is it not rather dangerous,” I inquired, “to take the law thus into your own hands ? I have heard that the Russian justices are extremely severe against any one who has recourse to what your German jurists call *Selbsthülfe*.”

“That they are ! So long as you are in Russia, you had much better let yourself be quietly robbed than use any violence against the robber. It is less trouble, and it is cheaper in the long run. If you do not, you may unexpectedly find yourself some fine morning in prison ! You must know that many of the young justices belong to the new school of morals.”

“What is that ? I have not heard of any new discoveries lately in the sphere of speculative ethics.”

“Well, to tell you the truth, I am not one of the initiated, and I can only tell you what I hear. So far as I have noticed, the representatives of the new doctrine talk chiefly about *Gumannost’* and *Tchelovetcheskoe dostoinstvo*. You know what these words mean ?”

“Humanity, or rather humanitarianism and human dignity,” I replied, not sorry to give a proof that I was advancing in my studies.

“There, again, you allow your dictionary and your priest to mislead you. These terms, when used by a Russian, cover much more than we understand by them, and those who use them most frequently have generally a special tenderness for all kinds of

malefactors. In the Dark Ages, which are only now coming to a close, malefactors were popularly believed to be bad, dangerous people ; but it has been lately discovered that this is a delusion. A young proprietor who lives not far off assures me that they are the true Protestants, and the most powerful social reformers ! They protest practically against those imperfections of social organization of which they are the involuntary victims. The feeble, characterless man quietly submits to his chains ; the bold, generous, strong man breaks his fetters, and helps others to do the same. A very ingenious defense of all kinds of rascality, isn't it ?

"Well, it is a theory that might certainly be carried too far, and might easily lead to very inconvenient conclusions ; but I am not sure that, theoretically speaking, it does not contain a certain element of truth. It ought at least to foster that charity which we are enjoined to practice towards all men. But perhaps 'all men' does not include publicans and sinners ?"

On hearing these words, Karl Karl'itch turned to me, and every feature of his honest German face expressed the most undisguised astonishment. "Are you, too, a Nihilist ?" he inquired, as soon as he had partially recovered his breath.

"I really don't know what a Nihilist is, but I may assure you that I am not an 'ist' of any kind. What is a Nihilist ?"

"If you live long in Russia you'll learn that without my telling you. As I was saying, I am not at all afraid of the peasants citing me before the justice. They know better. If they gave me too much trouble I could starve their cattle."

"Yes, when you catch them in your fields," I remarked, taking no notice of the abrupt turn which he had given to the conversation.

"I can do it without that. You must know that, by the Emancipation Law, the peasants received arable land, but they received no pasturage. I have the whip-hand of them there !"

The remarks of Karl Karl'itch on men and things were to me always interesting, for he was a shrewd observer, and displayed occasionally a pleasant, dry humor. But I very soon discovered that his opinions were not to be accepted without reserve. His strong, inflexible Teutonic nature often prevented him from judging impartially. He had no sympathy with the men and the institutions around him, and consequently he was unable to see things from the inside. The specks and blemishes on the surface he perceived

clearly enough, but he had no knowledge of the secret, deep-rooted causes by which these specks and blemishes were produced. The simple fact that a man was a Russian satisfactorily accounted, in his opinion, for any kind of moral deformity ; and his knowledge turned out to be by no means so extensive as I had at first supposed. Though he had been about fifteen years in the country, he knew very little about the life of the peasants beyond that small part of it which concerned directly his own interests and those of his employer. Of the communal organization, of the domestic life, religious beliefs, and ceremonial practices of the peasantry, of the occupations of those who annually left the village in search of labor—of all these and cognate subjects he knew little, and the little he happened to know was in great part false. In order to gain a knowledge of these matters it would be better, I perceived, to consult the priest, or, better still, the peasants themselves. But to do this it would be necessary to understand easily and speak fluently the colloquial language, and I was still very far from having acquired the requisite proficiency.

Even for one who possesses a natural facility for acquiring foreign tongues, the learning of Russian is by no means an easy task. Though Russian is essentially an Aryan language like our own, and contains only a slight intermixture of Tartar words, such as—*bashlyk* (a hood), *kalpak* (a night-cap), *arbuz* (a water-melon), &c.—it contains certain sounds unknown to West-European ears, and difficult for West-European tongues, and its roots, though in great part derived from the same original stock as those of the Græco-Latin and Teutonic languages, are generally not at all easily recognized. As an illustration of this, take the Russian word *otêts*. Strange as it may at first sight appear, this word is merely another form of our word *father*, of the German *vater*, and of the French *père*. The syllable *ets* is the ordinary Russian termination denoting the agent, corresponding to the English and German ending *er*, as we see in such words as—*kup-ets* (a buyer), *plov-ets* (a swimmer), and many others. The root *ot* is a mutilated form of *rot*, as we see in the word *otchina* (a paternal inheritance), which is frequently written *votchina*. Now *rot* is evidently the same root as the German *rat* and the English *fath*. *Quod erat demonstrandum*. All this is simple enough, and goes to prove the fundamental identity, or rather the community of origin, of the Slavonian and Teutonic languages ; but it will be readily under-

stood that etymological analogies so carefully disguised are of little practical use in helping us to acquire a foreign tongue. Besides this, the grammatical forms and constructions in Russian are very peculiar, and present a great many strange irregularities. As an illustration of this we may take the future tense. The Russian verb has commonly a simple and a frequentative future. The latter is always regularly formed by means of an auxiliary with the infinitive, as in English, but the former is constructed in a variety of ways, for which no rule can be given, so that the simple future of each individual verb must be learned by a pure effort of memory. In many verbs it is formed by prefixing a preposition, but it is impossible to determine by rule which preposition should be used. Thus *idú* (I go) becomes *poidú*, *pishú* (I write) becomes *napishú*, *pyú* (I drink) becomes *vuipyu*, and so on.

Closely akin to the difficulties of pronunciation is the difficulty of accentuating the proper syllable. In this respect, Russian is like Greek; you can never tell *à priori* on what syllable the accent falls. But it is more puzzling than Greek, for two reasons: firstly, it is not customary to print Russian with accents; and secondly, no one has yet been able to lay down precise rules for the transposition of the accent in the various inflections of the same word. Of this latter peculiarity, let one illustration suffice. The word *ruká* (hand) has the accent on the last syllable, but in the accusative (*rúku*) the accent goes back to the penultimate. It must not, however, be assumed that in all words of this type a similar transposition takes place. The word *bedú* (misfortune), for instance, as well as very many others, always retains the accent on the last syllable.

These and many similar difficulties, which need not be here enumerated, can be mastered only by a long familiarity with the language. Serious as they are, they need not frighten any one who is in the habit of learning foreign tongues. The ear and the tongue gradually become familiar with the peculiarities of inflection and accentuation, and practice fulfills the same function as abstract rules. The foreigner, it is true, however fluently he may talk, will never be able to pass for a Russian. If he speaks for any length of time he will be sure to betray himself. But there is here nothing peculiar. The same remark may be made regarding the English-speaking Russian. I have conversed with scores of Russians who spoke English admirably, but I have never met

any who spoke it precisely like Englishmen, except those who had learned it in their infancy.

It is commonly supposed that Russians have been endowed by Nature with a peculiar linguistic talent. Their own language, it is said, is so difficult that they have no difficulty in acquiring others. This common belief requires, as it seems to me, some explanation. That educated Russians are better linguists than the educated classes of Western Europe, there can be no possible doubt, for they always speak French, and very often English and German also. The question, however, is whether this is the result of a psychological peculiarity, or of other causes. Now, without venturing to deny the existence of a psychological peculiarity, I should say that the other causes have at least exercised a powerful influence. Any Russian who wishes to be regarded as *civilisé* must possess at least one foreign language; and, as a consequence of this, the children of the upper classes are always taught at least French in their infancy. Many households comprise a German nurse, a French tutor, and an English governess; and the children thus become accustomed from their earliest years to the use of these three languages. Besides this, the Russian language is phonetically very rich, and contains nearly all the sounds which are to be found in West-European languages. But there are some delicate sounds which it does not contain, and these the Russian rarely acquires correctly. As an instance of these, I may cite the short vowel sound in the word *but*, and the long vowel sound in the word *all*. Into such words even those Russians who speak our language with perfect correctness almost always introduce a modified sound of *o*, which falls unpleasantly on the fastidious English ear. As an instance of grammatical difficulties, I may mention that few Russians master the delicate distinction between *was* and *has been*.

Perhaps on the whole it would be well to apply here the Darwinian theory, and suppose that the Russian noblesse, having been obliged for several generations to acquire foreign languages, have gradually developed a hereditary polyglot talent.

Several circumstances concurred to assist me in my efforts, during my voluntary exile, to acquire at least such a knowledge of the language as would enable me to converse freely with the peasantry. In the first place, my reverend teacher was an agreeable,

kindly, talkative man, who took a great delight in telling interminable stories, quite independently of any satisfaction which he might derive from the consciousness of their being understood and appreciated. Even when walking alone he was always muttering something to an imagined listener. A stranger meeting him on such occasions might have supposed that he was holding converse with unseen spirits, though his broad muscular form and rubicund face militated strongly against such a supposition; but no man, woman, or child living within a radius of ten miles would ever have fallen into this mistake. Every one in the neighborhood knew that "Bátushka"—(papa) as he was familiarly called—was too prosaical, practical a man to see things ethereal, that he was an irrepressible talker, and that when he could not conveniently find an audience he created one by his own imagination. This peculiarity of his rendered me good service. Though for some time I understood very little of what he said, and very often misplaced the positive and negative monosyllables which I hazarded occasionally by way of encouragement, he talked vigorously all the same. Like all garrulous people, he was constantly repeating himself; but to this I did not object, for the custom—however objectionable in ordinary society—was for me highly beneficial, and when I had already heard a story once or twice before, it was much easier for me to assume at the proper moment the requisite expression.

Another fortunate circumstance was that in Ivánofka there were no distractions, so that the whole of the day and a great part of the night could be devoted to study. My chief amusement was an occasional walk in the fields with Karl Karlitch; and even this mild form of dissipation could not always be obtained, for as soon as rain had fallen it was difficult to go beyond the veranda—the mud precluding the possibility of a constitutional. The nearest approach to excitement was mushroom-gathering; and in this occupation my inability to distinguish the edible from the poisonous species made my efforts unacceptable. We lived so "far from the madding crowd" that its din scarcely reached our ears. A week or ten days might pass without our receiving any intelligence from the outer world. The nearest post-office was at the railway-station, and with that distant point we had no regular system of communication. Letters and newspapers remained there till called for, and were brought to us intermittently when

some one of our neighbors happened to pass that way. Current history was thus administered to us in big doses.

One very big dose I remember well. For a much longer time than usual no volunteer letter-carrier had appeared, and the delay was more than usually tantalizing, because it was known that war had broken out between France and Germany. At last a big bundle of newspapers was brought to me. Impatient to learn whether any great battle had been fought, I began by examining the latest number of the paper, and stumbled at once on an article headed, "Latest Intelligence: the Emperor at Wilhelmshöhe!!!" The large type in which the heading was printed and the three marks of exclamation showed plainly that the article was very important. I began to read with avidity, but was utterly mystified. What emperor was this? Probably the Tsar or the Emperor of Austria, for there was no German Emperor in those days. But no! It was evidently the Emperor of the French. And how did Napoleon get to Wilhelmshöhe? The French must have broken through the Rhine defenses, and pushed far into Germany. But no! As I read further, I found this theory equally untenable. It turned out that the Emperor was surrounded by Germans, and—a prisoner! In order to solve the mystery, I had to go back to the preceding numbers of the paper, and learned, at a sitting, all about the successive German victories, the affair of Sedan, and the other great events of that momentous time. The impression produced can scarcely be realized by those who have always imbibed current history in the homeopathic doses administered by the successive editions of the daily papers.

By the useful loquacity of my teacher and the possibility of devoting all my time to my linguistic studies, I made such rapid progress in the acquisition of the language, that I was able after a few weeks to understand much of what was said to me, and to express myself in a vague, roundabout way. In the latter operation I was much assisted by a peculiar faculty of divination which the Russians possess in a high degree. If a foreigner succeeds in expressing about one-fourth of an idea, the Russian peasant can generally fill up the remaining three-fourths from his own intuition.

As my powers of comprehension increased, my long conversations with the priest became more and more interesting. At first

his remarks and stories had for me simply a philological interest, but gradually I perceived that his talk contained a great deal of solid, interesting information regarding himself and the class to which he belonged—information of a kind not commonly found in grammatical exercises. Some of this I now propose to communicate to the reader.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VILLAGE PRIEST.

Priests' Names—Clerical Marriages—The White and the Black Clergy—Why the People do not respect the Parish Priests—History of the White Clergy—The Parish Priest and the Protestant Pastor—In what sense the Russian People are Religious—Icons—The Clergy and Popular Education—Ecclesiastical Reform.

IN formal introductions it is customary to pronounce in a more or less inaudible voice the names of the two persons introduced. Circumstances compel me in the present case to depart from received custom. The truth is, I do not know the names of the two people whom I wish to introduce to each other! The reader who knows his own name will readily pardon one-half of my ignorance, but he may naturally expect that I should know the name of a man with whom I profess to be acquainted, and with whom I held long conversations during a period of several months. Strange as it may seem, I do not. During all the time of my sojourn in Ivánofka I never heard him addressed or spoken of otherwise than as "Bátushka." Now "Bátushka" is not a name at all. It is simply the diminutive form of an obsolete word meaning "father," and is usually applied to all village priests. The *ushka* is a common diminutive termination, and the root *Bat* is evidently the same as that which appears in the Latin *pater*.

Though I do not happen to know what Bátushka's family name was, I can communicate two curious facts concerning it: he had not possessed it in his childhood, and it was not the same as his father's.

The reader whose intuitive powers have been preternaturally sharpened by a long course of sensation novels will probably leap to the conclusion that Bátushka was a mysterious individual, very different from what he seemed—either the illegitimate son of

some great personage, or a man of high birth who had committed some great sin, and who now sought oblivion and expiation in the humble duties of a parish priest. Let me dispel at once all delusions of this kind. Bátushka was actually as well as legally the legitimate son of an ordinary parish priest, who was still living about twenty miles off, and for many generations all his paternal and maternal ancestors, male and female, had belonged to the priestly caste. He was thus a Levite of the purest water, and thoroughly Levitical in his character. Though he knew by experience something about the weakness of the flesh, he had never committed any sins of the heroic kind, and had no reason to conceal his origin. The curious facts above stated were simply the result of a peculiar custom which exists among the Russian clergy. According to this custom, when a boy enters the seminary he receives from the Bishop a new family name. The name may be Bogoslafski, from a word signifying "Theology," or Bogolubof, "the love of God," or some similar term; or it may be derived from the name of the boy's native village, or from any other word which the Bishop thinks fit to choose. I know of one instance where a Bishop chose two French words for the purpose. He had intended to call the boy Velikoselski, after his native place, Velikoe Selo, which means "big village;" but finding that there was already a Velikoselski in the seminary, and being in a facetious frame of mind, he called the new comer Grandvillageski—a word that may perhaps sorely puzzle some philologist of the future.

My reverend teacher was a tall muscular man of about forty years of age, with a full dark-brown beard, and long lank hair falling over his shoulders. The visible parts of his dress consisted of three articles—a dingy-brown robe of coarse material buttoned closely at the neck, and descending to the ground, a wideawake hat, and a pair of large heavy boots. As to the esoteric parts of his attire, I refrained from making investigations. His life had been an uneventful one. At an early age he had been sent to the seminary in the chief town of the province, and had made for himself the reputation of a good average scholar. "The seminary of that time," he used to say to me, referring to that part of his life, "was not what it is now. Nowadays the teachers talk about humanitarianism, and the boys would think that a crime had been committed against human dignity if one of them happened to be flogged. But they don't consider that human dignity is at all

affected by their getting drunk, and going to—to—to places that I never went to. I was flogged often enough, and I don't think that I am a worse man on that account; and though I never heard then anything about pedagogical science that they talk so much about now, I'll read a bit of Latin yet with the best of them."

"When my studies were finished," said Bátushka, continuing the simple story of his life, "the Bishop found a wife for me, and I succeeded her father, who was then an old man. In that way I became priest of Ivánofka, and have remained here ever since. It is a hard life, for the parish is big, and my bit of land is not very fertile, but, praise be to God! I am healthy and strong, and get on well enough."

"You said that the Bishop found a wife for you," I remarked. "I suppose therefore that he was a great friend of yours."

"Not at all. The Bishop does the same for all the seminarists who wish to be ordained: it is an important part of his pastoral duties."

"Indeed!" I exclaimed in astonishment. "'Surely that is carrying the system of paternal government a little too far. Why should his Reverence meddle with things that don't concern him?'"

"But these matters do concern him. He is the natural protector of widows and orphans, especially among the clergy of his own diocese. When a parish priest dies, what is to become of his wife and daughters?"

Not perceiving clearly the exact bearing of these last remarks, I ventured to suggest that priests ought to economize in view of future contingencies.

"It is easy to speak," replied Bátushka: 'A story is soon told,' as the old proverb has it, 'but a thing is not soon done.' How are we to economize? Even without saving we have the greatest difficulty to make both ends meet."

"Then the widow and daughters might work and gain a livelihood."

"What, pray, could they work at?" asked Bátushka, and paused for a reply. Seeing that I had none to offer him, he continued, "Even the house and land do not belong to them, but to the new priest."

"If that position occurred in a novel," I said, "I could foretell what would happen. The author would make the new priest

fall in love with and marry one of the daughters, and then the whole family, including the mother-in-law, would live happily ever afterwards."

"That is exactly how the Bishop arranges the matter. What the novelist does with the lifeless puppets of his imagination, the Bishop does with real beings of flesh and blood. As a rational being, however, he cannot leave things to chance. Besides this, he must arrange the matter before the young man takes orders, because, by the rules of the Church, the marriage cannot take place after the ceremony of ordination. When the affair is arranged before the charge becomes vacant, the old priest can die with the pleasant consciousness that his family is provided for."

"Well, Bátushka, you certainly put the matter in a very plausible way, but there seem to be two flaws in the analogy. The novelist can make two people fall in love with each other, and make them live happily together with the mother-in-law, but that—with all due respect to his Reverence be it said—is beyond the power of a Bishop."

"I don't know," said Bátushka, avoiding the point of the objection, "that love-marriages are always the happiest ones; and as to the mother-in-law, there are—or at least there were until the Emancipation of the serfs—a mother-in-law and several daughters-in-law in almost every peasant household."

"And does harmony generally reign in peasant households?"

"That depends upon the head of the house. If he is a man of the right sort, he can keep the women-folks in order." This remark was made in an energetic tone, with the evident intention of assuring me that the speaker was himself "a man of the right sort," but I did not attribute much importance to it, for I have often observed that hen-pecked husbands habitually talk in this way when their wives are out of hearing. Altogether, I was by no means convinced that the system of providing for the widows and orphans of the clergy by means of *mariages de convenance* was a good one, but I determined to suspend my judgment until I should receive further information.

An additional bit of evidence came to me a week or two later. One morning, on going into the priest's house, I found that he had a friend with him—the priest of a village some fifteen miles off. Before we had got through the ordinary conventional remarks about the weather and the crops, a peasant drove up to the door

in his cart with a message that an old peasant was dying in a neighboring village, and desired the last consolations of religion. Bátushka was thus obliged to leave us, and his friend and I agreed to stroll leisurely in the direction of the village to which he was going, so as to meet him on his way home. The harvest was already finished, so that our road, after emerging from the village, lay through stubble-fields. Beyond this we entered the pine forest, and by the time we had reached this point I had succeeded in leading the conversation to the subject of clerical marriages.

"I have been thinking a good deal on this subject," I said, "and I should very much like to know your opinion about the system."

My new acquaintance was a tall, lean, black-haired man, with a sallow complexion and vinegar aspect—evidently one of those unhappy mortals who are intended by Nature to take a pessimistic view of all things, and to point out to their fellows the deep shadows of human life. I was not at all surprised, therefore, when he replied in a deep, decided tone, "Bad, very bad—utterly bad!"

The way in which these words were pronounced left no doubt as to the opinion of the speaker, but I was desirous of knowing on what that opinion was founded—more especially as I seemed to detect in the tone a note of personal grievance. My answer was shaped accordingly.

"I suspected that; but in the discussions which I have had I have always been placed at a disadvantage, not being able to adduce any definite facts in support of my opinion."

"You may congratulate yourself on being unable to find any in your own experience. A mother-in-law living in the house does not conduce to domestic harmony. I don't know how it is in your country, but so it is with us."

I hastened to assure him that this was not a peculiarity of Russia.

"I know it only too well," he continued. "My mother-in-law lived with me for some years, and I was obliged at last to insist on her going to another son-in-law."

"Rather selfish conduct towards your brother-in-law," I said to myself, and then added audibly, "I hope you have thus solved the difficulty satisfactorily."

"Not at all. Things are worse now than they were. I agreed

to pay her three roubles a month, and have regularly fulfilled my promise, but lately she has thought it not enough, and has made a complaint to the Bishop. Last week I went to him to defend myself, but as I had not money enough for all the officials in the Consistorium, I could not obtain justice. My mother-in-law had made all sorts of absurd accusations against me, and consequently I was laid under an inhibition for six weeks !”

“And what is the effect of an inhibition ?”

“The effect is that I cannot perform the ordinary rites of our religion. It is really very unjust,” he added, assuming an indignant tone, “and very annoying. Think of all the hardship and inconvenience to which it gives rise.”

As I thought of the hardship and inconvenience to which the parishioners must be exposed through the inconsiderate conduct of the old mother-in-law, I could not but sympathize with my new acquaintance’s indignation. My sympathy was, however, somewhat cooled when I perceived that I was on a wrong tack, and that the priest was looking at the matter from an entirely different point of view.

“You see,” he said, “it is a most unfortunate time of year. The peasants have gathered in their harvest, and can give of their abundance. There are merry-makings and marriages, besides the ordinary deaths and baptisms. Altogether I shall lose by the thing more than a hundred roubles !”

I confess I was a little shocked at hearing the priest thus speak of his sacred functions as if they were an ordinary marketable commodity, and talk of the inhibition as a pushing undertaker might talk of sanitary improvements. My surprise was caused not by the fact that he regarded the matter from a pecuniary point of view—for I was old enough to know that clerical human nature is not altogether insensible to pecuniary considerations—but by the fact that he should thus undisguisedly express his opinions to a stranger without in the least suspecting that there was anything unseemly in his way of speaking. The incident appeared to me very characteristic, but I refrained from all audible comments, lest I should unexpectedly check his communicativeness. With the view of encouraging it, I professed to be very much interested, as I really was, in what he said, and I asked him how in his opinion the present unsatisfactory state of things might be remedied.

“There is but one cure,” he said, with a readiness that showed

he had often spoken on the theme already, "and that is freedom and publicity. We full-grown men are treated like children, and watched like conspirators. If we wish to preach a sermon we are expected to show it first to the Blagotchinnny, and——"

"I beg your pardon, who is the Blagotchinnny?"

"The Blagotchinnny is a parish priest, who is in direct relations with the Consistorium of the Province, and who is supposed to exercise a strict supervision over all the other parish priests of his district. He acts as the spy of the Consistorium, which is filled with greedy, shameless officials, who are deaf to any one who does not come provided with a handful of roubles. The Bishop may be a good, well-intentioned man, but he always sees and acts through these worthless subordinates. Besides this, the Bishops and heads of monasteries, who monopolize the higher places in the ecclesiastical Administration, all belong to the Black Clergy—that is to say, they are all monks—and consequently cannot understand our wants. How can they, on whom celibacy is imposed by the rules of the Church, understand the position of a parish priest who has to bring up a family and to struggle with domestic cares of every kind? What they do is to take all the comfortable places for themselves, and leave us all the hard work. The monasteries are rich enough, and you see how poor we are. Perhaps you have heard that the parish priests extort money from the peasants—refusing to perform the rites of baptism or burial until a considerable sum has been paid. It is only too true, but who is to blame? The priest must live and bring up his family, and you cannot imagine the humiliations to which he has to submit in order to gain a scanty pittance. I know it by experience. When I make the periodical visitation I can see that the peasants grudge every handful of rye and every egg that they give me. I can overhear their sneers as I go away, and I know that they have many sayings such as—'The priest takes from the living and from the dead.' Many of them fasten their doors, pretending to be away from home, and do not even take the precaution of keeping silent till I am out of hearing."

"You surprise me," I said, in reply to the last part of this long tirade; "I have always heard that the Russians are a very religious people—at least, the lower classes."

"So they are; but the peasantry are poor and heavily taxed. They set great importance on the sacraments, and observe rigor-

ously the fasts, which comprise nearly a half of the year, but they show very little respect for their priests, who are almost as poor as themselves."

"But I do not see clearly how you propose to remedy this state of things."

"By freedom and publicity, as I said before." The worthy man seemed to have learned this formula by rote. "First of all, our wants must be made known. In some provinces there have been attempts to do this by means of provincial assemblies of the clergy, but these efforts have always been strenuously opposed by the Consistories, whose members fear publicity above all things. But in order to have publicity we must have more freedom."

Here followed a long discourse on freedom and publicity, which seemed to me very confused. So far as I could understand the argument, there was a good deal of reasoning in a circle. Freedom was necessary in order to get publicity, and publicity was necessary in order to get freedom; and the practical result would be that the clergy would enjoy bigger salaries and more popular respect. We had only got this length in the investigation of the subject, when our conversation was interrupted by the rumbling of a peasant's cart. In a few seconds our friend appeared, and the conversation took a different turn.

Since that time I have frequently spoken on this subject with competent authorities, and nearly all have admitted that the present condition of the clergy is highly unsatisfactory, and that the parish priest rarely enjoys the respect of his parishioners. In a semi-official report, which I once accidentally stumbled upon when searching for material of a different kind, the facts are stated in the following plain language: "The people"—I seek to translate as literally as possible—"do not respect the clergy, but persecute them with derision and reproaches, and feel them to be a burden. In nearly all the popular comic stories, the priest, his wife, or his laborer is held up to ridicule, and in all the proverbs and popular sayings where the clergy are mentioned it is always with derision. The people shun the clergy, and have recourse to them not from the inner impulse of conscience, but from necessity. . . . And why do the people not respect the clergy? Because it forms a class apart; because, having received a false kind of education, it does not introduce into the life of the people the teaching of the Spirit, but remains in the mere dead forms of

outward ceremonial, at the same time despising these forms even to blasphemy; because the clergy itself continually presents examples of want of respect to religion, and transforms the service of God into a profitable trade. Can the people respect the clergy when they hear how one priest stole money from below the pillow of a dying man at the moment of confession, how another was publicly dragged out of a house of ill fame, how a third christened a dog, how a fourth whilst officiating at the Easter service was dragged by the hair from the altar by the deacon? Is it possible for the people to respect priests who spend their time in the gin-shop, write fraudulent petitions, fight with the cross in their hands, and abuse each other in bad language at the altar? One might fill several pages with examples of this kind—in each instance naming the time and place—without overstepping the boundaries of the province of Nizhni-Novgorod. Is it possible for the people to respect the clergy when they see everywhere amongst them simony, carelessness in performing the religious rites, and disorder in administering the sacraments? Is it possible for the people to respect the clergy when they see that truth has disappeared from it, and that the consistories, guided in their decisions not by rules, but by personal friendship and bribery, destroy in it the last remains of truthfulness? If we add to all this the false certificates which the clergy give to those who do not wish to partake of the Eucharist, the dues illegally extracted from the Old Ritualists, the conversion of the altar into a source of revenue, the giving of churches to priests' daughters as a dowry, and similar phenomena, the question as to whether the people can respect the clergy requires no answer."

As these words were written by an orthodox Russian,* celebrated for his extensive and intimate knowledge of Russian provincial life, and were addressed in all seriousness to a member of the Imperial family, we may safely assume that they contain a considerable amount of truth. The reader must not, however, imagine that all Russian priests are of the kind above referred to. Many of them are honest, respectable, well-intentioned men, who conscientiously fulfill their humble duties, and strive hard to procure a good education for their children. If they have less learning, culture, and refinement than the Roman Catholic priesthood,

* Mr. Melnikof, in a "secret" Report to the Grand Duke Constantine.

they have at the same time infinitely less fanaticism, less spiritual pride, and less intolerance towards the adherents of other faiths. Both the good and the bad qualities of the Russian priesthood at the present time can be easily explained by its past history, and by certain peculiarities of the national character.

The Russian White Clergy—that is to say, the parish priests, as distinguished from the monks, who are called the Black Clergy—have had a curious history. In early times they were drawn from all classes of the population, and freely elected by the parishioners. When a man was elected by the popular vote, he was presented to the Bishop, and if he was found to be a fit and proper person for the office, he was at once ordained. But very soon this custom fell into disuse. The Bishops, finding that many of the candidates presented were illiterate peasants, gradually assumed the right of appointing the priests, with or without the consent of the parishioners; and their choice generally fell on the sons of the clergy as the men best fitted to take orders. The creation of Bishops' schools, afterwards called seminaries, in which the sons of the clergy were educated, naturally led, in the course of time, to the total exclusion of the other classes. At the same time, the policy of the civil Government led to the same end. Peter the Great laid down the principle that every subject should in some way serve the State—the nobles as officers in the army or navy, or as officials in the civil service; the clergy as ministers of religion; and the lower classes as soldiers, sailors, or tax-payers. Of these three classes, the clergy had by far the lightest burdens to bear, and consequently many nobles and peasants would willingly have entered its ranks. But this species of desertion the Government could not tolerate, and accordingly the priesthood was surrounded by a legal barrier, which prevented all outsiders from entering it. Thus by the combined efforts of the ecclesiastical and the civil Administration the clergy became a separate class or caste, legally and actually incapable of mingling with the other classes of the population.

The simple fact that the clergy became an exclusive caste, with a peculiar character, peculiar habits, and peculiar ideals, would in itself have had a prejudicial influence on the priesthood; but this was not all. The caste increased in numbers by the process of natural reproduction much more rapidly than the offices to be filled, so that the supply of priests and deacons soon far exceeded

the demand ; and the disproportion between supply and demand became every year greater and greater. Thus was formed an ever-increasing clerical Proletariate, which—as is always the case with a Proletariate of any kind—gravitated towards the towns. In vain the Government issued ukazes prohibiting the priests from quitting their places of domicile, and treated as vagrants and run-aways those who disregarded the prohibition ; in vain successive sovereigns endeavored to diminish the number of these supernumeraries by drafting them wholesale into the army. In Moscow, St. Petersburg, and all the larger towns, the cry was still, “ They come ! ” Every morning, in the kremlin of Moscow, a large crowd of them assembled for the purpose of being hired to officiate in the private chapels of the rich nobles, and a great deal of hard bargaining took place between the priests and the lackeys sent to hire them—conducted in the same spirit, and in nearly the same forms, as that which simultaneously took place in the bazaar close by between extortionate traders and thrifty housewives. “ Listen to me,” a priest would say, as an ultimatum, to a lackey who was trying to beat down the price : “ if you don’t give me seventy-five kopeks without further ado, I’ll take a bite of this roll, and that will be an end to it ! ” And that would have been an end to the proceedings, for, according to the rules of the Church, a priest cannot officiate after breaking his fast. The ultimatum, however, could be used with effect only to country servants who had recently come to town. A sharp lackey, experienced in this kind of diplomacy, would have laughed at the threat, and replied coolly, “ Bite away, Bátushka : I can find plenty more of your sort ! ” Amusing scenes of this kind I have heard described by old people who professed to have been eye-witnesses.

The condition of the priests who remained in the villages was not much better. Those of them who were fortunate enough to find places were raised at least above the fear of absolute destitution, but their position was by no means enviable. They received little consideration or respect from the peasantry, and still less from the nobles. When the church was situated not on the State Demesnes, but on a private estate, they were practically under the power of the proprietor—almost as completely as his serfs ; and sometimes that power was exercised in a most humiliating and shameful way. I have heard, for instance, of one priest who was ducked in the pond on a cold winter day for the amusement of

the proprietor and his guests—choice spirits, of rough, jovial temperament ; and of another who, having neglected to take off his hat as he passed the proprietor's house, was put into a barrel and rolled down a hill into the river at the bottom !

In citing these incidents, I do not at all mean to imply that they represent the relations which usually existed between proprietors and village priests, for I am quite aware that wanton cruelty was not among the ordinary vices of Russian serf-owners. My object in mentioning the incidents is to show how a brutal proprietor—and it must be admitted that there were not a few brutal individuals in the class—could treat a priest without much danger of being called to account for his conduct. Of course such conduct was an offense in the eyes of the criminal law ; but the criminal law of that time was very short-sighted, and strongly disposed to close its eyes completely when the offender was an influential proprietor, and the victim merely a village priest. Had the incidents reached the ears of the Emperor Nicholas, he would probably have ordered the culprit to be summarily and severely punished ; but, as the Russian proverb has it, “ the Heaven is high, and the Tsar is far off.” A village priest treated in this barbarous way could have little hope of redress, and, if he were a prudent man, he would make no attempt to obtain it ; for any annoyance which he might give the proprietor by complaining to the ecclesiastical authorities would be sure to be paid back to him with interest in some indirect way.

The sons of the clergy who did not succeed in finding regular sacerdotal employment were in a still worse position. Many of them served as scribes of intermediate officials in the public offices, where they commonly eked out their scanty salaries by unblushing extortion and pilfering. Those who did not succeed in gaining even modest employment of this kind had to keep off starvation by less lawful means, and not unfrequently found their way into the prisons or to Siberia.

In judging of the Russian priesthood of the present time, we must call to mind this severe school through which it has passed, and we must also take into consideration the spirit which has been for centuries predominant in the Eastern Church—I mean the strong tendency both in the clergy and in the laity to attribute an inordinate importance to the ceremonial element of religion. Primitive mankind is everywhere and always disposed to regard

religion as simply a mass of mysterious rites, which have a secret magical power of averting evil in this world and securing felicity in the next. To this general rule the Russian peasantry are no exception, and the Russian Church has not done all it might have done to eradicate this conception and to bring religion into closer association with ordinary morality. Hence such incidents as the following are still possible. A robber kills and rifles a traveler, but refrains from eating a piece of cooked meat which he finds in the cart, because it happens to be a fast-day ! A peasant prepares to rob a young *attaché* of the Austrian Embassy in St. Petersburg, and ultimately kills his victim, but before going to the house he enters a church and commends his undertaking to the protection of the saints !! A housebreaker, when in the act of robbing a church, finds it difficult to extract the jewels from an Icon, and makes a vow that if a certain saint assists him he will place a rouble's-worth of tapers before the saint's image !!

All these are of course extreme cases, but they illustrate a tendency which in its milder forms is only too general amongst the Russian people—the tendency to regard religion as a mass of ceremonies which have a magical rather than a spiritual significance. The poor woman who kneels at a religious procession in order that the Icon may be carried over her head, and the rich merchant who invites the priests to bring some famous Icon to his house, illustrate this tendency in a more harmless way.

According to a popular saying, “as is the priest, so is the parish,” and the converse proposition is equally true—as is the parish, so is the priest. The great majority of priests, like the great majority of men in general, content themselves with simply striving to perform what is expected of them, and their character is consequently determined to a certain extent by the ideas and conceptions of their parishioners. This will become more apparent if we contrast the Russian priest with the Protestant pastor.

According to Protestant conceptions, the village pastor is a man of grave demeanor and exemplary conduct, and possesses a certain amount of education and refinement. He ought to expound weekly to his flock, in simple, impressive words, the great truths of Christianity, and exhort his hearers to walk in the paths of righteousness. Besides this, he is expected to comfort the afflicted, to assist the needy, to counsel those who are harassed with doubts, and to admonish those who openly stray from the narrow path.

Such is the ideal in the popular mind, and nearly all pastors seek to realize it, if not in very deed, at least in appearance. The Russian priest, on the contrary, has no such ideal set before him by his parishioners. He is expected merely to conform to certain observances and to perform punctiliously the rites and ceremonies prescribed by the Church. If he does this without practicing extortion, his parishioners are quite satisfied. He rarely preaches or exhorts, and neither has nor seeks to have a moral influence over his flock. I have occasionally heard of Russian priests who approach to what I have termed the Protestant ideal, but I must confess that I have never seen any of them, and I venture to assert that their number is comparatively small.

In the above contrast I have accidentally omitted one important feature. The Protestant clergy have in all countries rendered valuable service to the cause of popular education. The reason of this is not difficult to find. In order to be a good Protestant it is necessary to "search the Scriptures," and to do this one must be able at least to read. To be a good member of the Greek Orthodox Church, on the contrary, according to popular conceptions, the reading of the Scriptures is not necessary, and therefore primary education has not in the eyes of the Greek Orthodox priest the same importance which it has in the eyes of the Protestant pastor.

It must be admitted that the Russian people are in a certain sense religious. They go regularly to church on Sundays and holy-days, cross themselves repeatedly when they pass a church or Icon, take the Holy Communion at stated seasons, rigorously abstain from animal food—not only on Wednesdays and Fridays, but also during Lent and the other long fasts—make occasional pilgrimages to holy shrines, and, in a word, fulfill punctiliously all the ceremonial observances which they suppose necessary for salvation. But here their religiousness ends. They are generally profoundly ignorant of religious doctrine, and know little or nothing of Holy Writ. A peasant, it is said, was once asked by a priest if he could name the three Persons of the Trinity, and replied without a moment's hesitation, "How can one not know that, Bátushka? Of course it is the Saviour, the Mother of God, and Saint Nicholas the miracle-worker!" That answer represents fairly enough the theological attainments of a very large section of the peasantry. The anecdote is so well known

and so often repeated that it is probably an invention, but it is not a calumny. Of theology and of what Protestants term the "inner religious life," the Russian peasant has no conception. For him the ceremonial part of religion suffices, and he has the most unbounded, childlike confidence in the saving efficacy of the rites which he practices. If he has been baptized in infancy, has regularly observed the fasts, has annually partaken of the Holy Communion, and has just confessed and received extreme unction, he feels death approach with the most perfect tranquillity. He is tormented with no doubts as to the efficacy of faith or works, and has no fears that his past life may possibly have rendered him unfit for eternal felicity. Like a man in a sinking ship who has buckled on his life-preserver, he feels perfectly secure. With no fear for the future and little regret for the present or the past, he awaits calmly the dread summons, and dies with a resignation which a Stoic philosopher might envy.

In the above paragraph I have used the word Icon, and perhaps the reader may not clearly understand the word. Let me explain then, briefly, what an Icon is—a very necessary explanation, for the Icons play an important part in the religious observances of the Russian people.

Icons are pictorial half-length representations of the Saviour, of the Madonna, or of a saint, executed in archaic Byzantine style, on a yellow or gold ground, and varying in size from a square inch to several square feet. Very often the whole picture, with the exception of the face and hands of the figure, is covered with a metal *plaque*, embossed so as to represent the form of the figure and the drapery. When this *plaque* is not used, the crown and costume are often adorned with pearls and other precious stones—sometimes of great price.

A careful examination of Icons belonging to various periods has led me to the conclusion that they were originally simple pictures, and that the metallic *plaque* is a modern innovation. The first departure from purely pictorial representation seems to have been the habit of placing on the head of the painted figure a piece of ornamental gold-work, sometimes set with precious stones, to represent a nimbus or a crown. This strange, and to our minds barbarous, method of combining painting with *haut-relief*—if such a term may be applied to this peculiar kind of decoration—was afterwards gradually extended to the various

parts of the costume, until only the face and hands of the figure remained visible, when it was found convenient to unite these various ornaments with the gilt background into a single embossed plate.

In respect of religious significance, Icons are of two kinds: simple, and miraculous or miracle-working (*techdotvornyy*). The former are manufactured in enormous quantities—chiefly in the province of Vladimir, where whole villages are employed in this kind of work—and are to be found in every Russian house, from the hut of the peasant to the palace of the Emperor. They are generally placed high up in a corner facing the door, and good orthodox Christians on entering bow in that direction, making at the same time the sign of the cross. Before and after meals the same short ceremony is always performed. On the eve of fête-days a small lamp is kept burning before at least one of the Icons in the house.

The wonder-working Icons are comparatively few in number, and are always carefully preserved in a church or chapel. They are commonly believed to have been “not made with hands,” and to have appeared in a miraculous way. A monk, or it may be a common mortal, has a vision, in which he is informed that he may find a miraculous Icon in such a place, and on going to the spot indicated he finds it, sometimes buried, sometimes hanging on a tree. The sacred treasure is then removed to a church, and the news spreads like wildfire through the district. Thousands flock to prostrate themselves before the heaven-sent picture, and some of them are healed of their diseases—a fact that plainly indicates its miracle-working power. The whole affair is then officially reported to the Most Holy Synod—the highest ecclesiastical authority in Russia under the Emperor—in order that the existence of the miracle-working power may be fully and regularly proved. The official recognition of the fact is by no means a mere matter of form, for the Synod is well aware that wonder-working Icons are always a rich source of revenue to the monasteries where they are kept, and that zealous Superiors are consequently apt in such cases to lean to the side of credulity, rather than that of over-severe criticism. A regular investigation is therefore made, and the formal recognition is not granted till the testimony of the finder is thoroughly examined and the alleged miracles duly authenticated. If the recognition is

granted, the Icon is treated with the greatest veneration, and is sure to be visited by pilgrims from far and near.

Some of the most revered Icons—as, for instance, the Kazan Madonna—have annual fête-days instituted in their honor; or, more correctly speaking, the anniversary of their miraculous appearance is observed as a religious holiday. A few of them have an additional title to popular respect and veneration: that of being intimately associated with great events in the national history. The Vladimir Madonna, for example, once saved Moscow from the Tartars; the Smolensk Madonna accompanied the army in the glorious campaign against Napoleon in 1812; and when in that year it was known in Moscow that the French were advancing on the city, the people wished the Metropolitan to take the Iberian Madonna, which may still be seen near one of the gates of the kremlin, and to lead them out armed with hatchets against the enemy.

If the Russian priests have done little to advance popular education, they have at least never intentionally opposed it. Unlike their Roman Catholic brethren, they do not hold that “a little learning is a dangerous thing,” and do not fear that faith may be endangered by knowledge. Indeed, it is a remarkable fact that the Russian Church regards with profound apathy those various intellectual movements which at present cause serious alarm to many thoughtful Christians in Western Europe. Why this is so, I may perhaps endeavor to explain at some future time. It is a difficult subject, which cannot be dismissed in a few sentences.

Though the unsatisfactory condition of the parochial clergy is generally recognized by the educated classes, very few people take the trouble to consider seriously how it might be improved. During the Reform enthusiasm which raged at the commencement of the present reign, ecclesiastical affairs received almost no attention; and at present, when the storm has passed and apathy prevails, they receive still less. The truth is that educated Russians, as a rule, take no interest in Church matters, and not a few of them are so very “far-advanced” that they regard religion in all its forms as an old-world superstition, which should be allowed to die as tranquilly as possible. The Government has, however, done something towards improving the condition of the parish priests. Many of the barriers which tended to make the priesthood a caste have been broken down, and hundreds of priests’ sons

are now making their way in the Civil Service, in the Judicial Administration, as Professors in the Universities, and in various industrial undertakings. In addition to this, an attempt is at present being made to diminish the number of parishes, and thereby to ameliorate the condition of the incumbents. These changes will, I believe, ultimately produce beneficial results, but long years must elapse before the spirit with which the class is animated can undergo a radical modification.

CHAPTER V.

A MEDICAL CONSULTATION.

Unexpected Illness—A Village Doctor—Siberian Plague—My Studies—Russian Historians—A Russian Imitator of Dickens—A *ci-devant* Domestic Serf—Medicine and Witchcraft—A Remnant of Paganism—Credulity of the Peasantry—Absurd Rumors—A Mysterious Visit from St. Barbara—Cholera on Board a Steamer—Hospitals—Lunatic Asylums—Amongst Maniacs.

IN enumerating the requisites for traveling in the less frequented parts of Russia, I omitted to mention one important condition: the traveler must make up his mind to be always in good health, and in case of illness, to dispense with regular medical attendance. This I learned by experience during my stay at Ivánofka.

A man who is accustomed to be always well, and has consequently cause to believe himself exempt from the ordinary ills that flesh is heir to, naturally feels aggrieved—as if some one had inflicted upon him an undeserved injury—when he suddenly finds himself ill. At first he refuses to believe the fact, and, as far as possible, takes no notice of the disagreeable symptoms.

Such was my state of mind on being awakened early one morning by peculiar symptoms which I had never before experienced. Unwilling to admit to myself the possibility of being ill, I got up, and endeavored to dress as usual, but very soon discovered that I was unable to stand. There was no denying the fact: not only was I ill, but the malady, whatever it was, surpassed my powers of diagnosis; and when the symptoms increased steadily all that day and the following night, I was constrained to take the humiliating decision of asking for medical advice. To my inquiries whether there was a doctor in the neighborhood, the old servant replied, "There is not exactly a doctor, but there is a Feldsher in the village."

"And what is a Feldsher?"

"A Feldsher is . . . is a Feldsher."

"I am quite aware of that, but I should like to know what you mean by the word. What is this Feldsher?"

"He's an old soldier who dresses wounds and gives physic."

The definition did not dispose me in favor of the mysterious personage, but as there was nothing better to be had I ordered him to be sent for, notwithstanding the strenuous opposition of the old servant, who evidently did not believe in Feldshers.

In about half an hour a tall, broad-shouldered man entered, and stood bolt upright in the middle of the room in the attitude which is designated in military language by the word "Attention." His clean-shaven chin, long mustache, and closely-cropped hair confirmed one part of the old servant's definition; he was unmistakably an old soldier.

"You are a Feldsher," I said, making use of the word which I had recently added to my vocabulary.

"Exactly so, your Nobility!" These words, the ordinary form of affirmation used by soldiers to their officers, were pronounced in a loud, metallic, monotonous tone, as if the speaker had been an automaton conversing with a brother automaton at a distance of twenty yards. As soon as the words were pronounced the mouth of the machine closed spasmodically, and the head, which had been momentarily turned towards me, reverted to its former position with a jerk, as if it had received the order "Eyes front!"

"Then please to sit down here, and I'll tell you what is the matter with me." Upon this, the figure took three paces to the front, wheeled to the right-about, and sat down on the edge of the chair, retaining the position of "Attention" as nearly as the sitting posture would allow. When the symptoms had been carefully described, he knitted his brows, and after some reflection remarked, "I can give you a dose of . . ."—here followed a long word which I did not understand.

"I don't wish you to give me a dose of anything till I know what is the matter with me. Though a bit of a doctor myself. I have no idea what it is, and, pardon me, I think you are in the same position." Noticing a look of ruffled professional dignity on his face, I added, as a sedative, "It is evidently something very peculiar, so that if the first medical practitioner in the country

were present he would probably be as much puzzled as ourselves."

The sedative evidently had the desired effect. "Well, sir, to tell you the truth," he said, in a more human tone of voice, "I do not clearly understand what it is."

"Exactly; and therefore I think we had better leave the cure to Nature, and not interfere with her mode of treatment."

"Perhaps it would be better."

"No doubt. And now, since I have to lie here on my back, and feel rather lonely, I should like to have a talk with you. You are not in a hurry, I hope?"

"Not at all. My assistant knows where I am, and will send for me if I am required."

"So you have an assistant, have you?"

"Oh yes; a very sharp young fellow, who has been two years in the Feldsher school, and has now come here to help me and learn more by practice. That is a new way. I never was at a school of the kind myself, but had to pick up what I could when a servant in the hospital. There were, I believe, no such schools in my time. The one where my assistant learned was opened by the Zemstvo."

"The Zemstvo is the new local administration, is it not?"

"Exactly so. And I could not do without the assistant," continued my new acquaintance, gradually losing his rigidity, and showing himself, what he really was, a kindly, talkative man. "I have often to go to other villages, and almost every day a number of peasants come here. At first I had very little to do, for the people thought I was an official, and would make them pay dearly for what I should give them; but now they know that they don't require to pay, and come in great numbers. And everything I give them—though sometimes I don't clearly understand what the matter is—seems to do them good. I believe that faith does as much as physic."

"In my country," I remarked, "there is a sect of doctors who get the benefit of that principle. They give their patients two or three little balls no bigger than a pin's head, or a few drops of tasteless liquid, and they sometimes work wonderful cures."

"That system would not do for us. The Russian *muzhik* (peasant) would have no faith if he swallowed merely things of that kind. What he believes in is something with a very bad taste,

and lots of it. That is his idea of a medicine ; and he thinks that the more he takes of a medicine, the better chance he has of getting well. When I wish to give a peasant several doses I make him come for each separate dose, for I know that if I did not he would probably swallow the whole as soon as he was out of sight. But there is not much serious disease here—not like what I used to see on the Sheksná. You have been on the Sheksná ? ”

“ Not yet, but I intend going there.” The Sheksná is a river which falls into the Volga, and forms part of the great system of water-communication connecting the Volga with the Neva.

“ When you go there you will see lots of diseases. If there is a hot summer, and plenty of barges passing, something is sure to break out—typhus, or black small-pox, or Siberian plague, or something of the kind. That Siberian plague is a curious thing. Whether it really comes from Siberia, God only knows. So soon as it breaks out the horses die by dozens, and sometimes men and women are attacked, though it is not properly a human disease. They say that flies carry the poison from the dead horses to the people. The sign of it is a thing like a boil, with a dark-colored rim. If this is cut open in time the person may recover, but if it is not the person dies. There is cholera, too, sometimes.”

“ What a delightful country,” I said to myself, “ for a young doctor who wishes to make discoveries in the science of disease ! ” The catalogue of diseases inhabiting this favored region was apparently not yet complete, but it was cut short for the moment by the arrival of the assistant, with the announcement that his superior was wanted.

This first interview with the Feldsher was, on the whole, satisfactory. He had not rendered me any medical assistance, but he had helped me to pass an hour pleasantly, and had given me a little information of the kind I desired. My later interviews with him were equally agreeable. He was naturally an intelligent, observant man, who had seen a great deal of the Russian world, and could describe graphically what he had seen. Unfortunately, the horizontal position to which I was condemned prevented me from noting down at the time the interesting things which he related to me. His visits, together with those of Karl Karl'itch, and of the priest, who kindly spent a great part of his time with me, helped me to while away many an hour which would otherwise have been dreary enough.

During the intervals, when I was alone, I devoted myself to reading—sometimes Russian history and sometimes works of fiction. The history was that of Karamzin, who may fairly be called the Russian Livy. It interested me much by the facts which it contained, but irritated me not a little by the rhetorical style in which it is written. Afterwards, when I had waded through eighteen volumes of the gigantic work of Solovyoff—or Solovief as the name is sometimes unphonetically written—which is simply a vast collection of valuable but undigested material, I was much less severe on the picturesque descriptions and ornate style of his illustrious predecessor. The first work of fiction which I read was a collection of tales by Grigoróvitch, which had been given to me by the author on my departure from St. Petersburg. These tales, descriptive of rural life in Russia, had been written, as the author afterwards admitted to me, under the influence of Dickens. Many of the little tricks and affectations which became painfully obtrusive in Dickens's later works, I had no difficulty in recognizing under their Russian garb. In spite of these, I found the book very pleasant reading, and received from it some new notions—to be afterwards verified, of course—about Russian peasant life.

One of these tales made a deep impression upon me, and now, after a lapse of more than six years, I can recall easily the chief incidents. The story opens with the description of a village in late autumn. It has been raining for some time heavily, and the road has become covered with a deep layer of black mud. An old woman—a small proprietor—is sitting at home with a friend, drinking tea and trying to read the future by means of a pack of cards. This occupation is suddenly interrupted by the entrance of a female servant, who announces that she has discovered an old man, apparently very ill, lying in one of the outhouses. The old woman goes out to see her uninvited guest, and being of a kindly nature, prepares to have him removed to a more comfortable place, and properly attended to; but her friend whispers to her that perhaps he is a vagrant, and the generous impulse is thereby checked. When it is discovered that the suspicion is only too well founded, and that the man has no passport, the old woman becomes thoroughly alarmed. Her imagination pictures to her the terrible consequences that would ensue if the police should discover that she had harbored a vagrant. All her little fortune might be extorted from her. And if the old man should

happen to die in her house or farmyard! The possible consequences in that case were too horrible to be thought of. Not only might she lose everything, but she might even be dragged to prison. At the sight of these dangers the old woman forgets her tender-heartedness, and becomes inexorable. The old man, sick unto death though he be, must leave the premises instantly. Knowing full well that he will nowhere find a refuge, he walks forth into the cold, dark, stormy night, and next morning a dead body is found at a short distance from the village.

Why this story, which was not strikingly remarkable for artistic merit, impressed me so deeply I cannot well explain. Perhaps it was because I was myself ill at the time, and imagined how terrible it would be to be turned out on the muddy road on a cold, wet October night. Besides this, the story interested me as illustrating the terror which the police inspired during the reign of Nicholas. The ingenious devices which they employed for extorting money formed the subject of many satirical sketches, written about the same time as the tale above mentioned. One of these, which I read shortly afterwards, has likewise remained in my memory. So far as I remember, the facts were as follows:—An officer of rural police, when driving on a country road, finds a dead body by the wayside. Congratulating himself on this bit of good luck, he proceeds to the nearest village, and lets the inhabitants know that all manner of legal proceedings will be taken against them, so that the supposed murderer may be discovered. The peasants are of course frightened, and give him a considerable sum of money in order that he may hush up the affair. An ordinary officer of police would have been quite satisfied with this ransom, but this officer was not an ordinary man, and was very much in need of money; he conceives therefore the brilliant idea of repeating the experiment. Taking up the dead body, he takes it away in his tarantass, and a few hours later declares to the inhabitants of a village some miles off that some of them have been guilty of murder, and that he intends to investigate the matter thoroughly. The peasants of course pay liberally in order to escape the investigation, and the rascally officer, emboldened by success, repeats the trick in different villages until he has gathered a large sum.

Very many tales and sketches of this kind were published during the first years of the present reign, when the long-pent-up

indignation against the severe repressive *régime* of the Emperor Nicholas, and the incredible administrative abuses to which it gave rise, found for a time free expression. The public have now, however, become tired of this species of literature, and authors seek other subjects for the exercise of their satirical talents.

When I did not feel disposed to read, and had none of my regular visitors with me, I sometimes spent an hour or two in talking with the old man-servant who attended me. Anton was decidedly an old man, but what his age precisely was I never could discover; either he did not know himself, or he did not for some reason wish to tell me. In appearance he seemed about sixty, but from certain remarks which he made I concluded that he must be nearer seventy, though he had scarcely a gray hair on his head. As to who his father was he seemed, like the famous Topsy, to have no very clear ideas, but he had an advantage over Topsy with regard to his maternal ancestry. His mother had been a serf who had fulfilled for some time the functions of lady's maid, and after the death of her mistress had been promoted to a not clearly-defined position of responsibility in the household. That promotion had taken place some time about the end of the last or the commencement of the present century. Anton, too, had been promoted in his time. His first function in the household had been that of assistant-keeper of the tobacco-pipes, from which humble office he had gradually risen to a position which may be roughly designated as that of butler. All this time he had been of course a serf, as his mother had been before him, but being naturally a man of sluggish intellect, he had never thoroughly realized the fact, and had certainly never conceived the possibility of being anything different from what he was. His master was master, and he himself was Anton, obliged to obey his master, or at least conceal disobedience—these were long the main facts in his conception of the universe, and, as philosophers generally do with regard to fundamental facts or axioms, he had accepted them without examination. By means of these simple postulates he had led a tranquil life, untroubled by doubts, until the year 1861, when the so-called freedom was brought to Ivánofka. He himself had not gone to the church to hear Bátushka read the Tsar's manifesto, but his master, on returning from the ceremony, had called him and said, "Anton, you are

free now, but the Tsar says you are to serve as you have done for two years longer."

To this startling announcement Anton had replied, coolly, "Slushayus," or, as we should say, "Yes, sir," and without further comment had gone to fetch his master's breakfast; but what he saw and heard during the next few weeks had greatly troubled his old conceptions of human society and the fitness of things. From that time must be dated, I suppose, the expression of mental confusion which his face habitually wore.

The first thing that roused his indignation was the conduct of his fellow-servants. Nearly all the unmarried ones seemed to be suddenly attacked by a peculiar matrimonial mania. The reason of this was that the new law expressly gave permission to the emancipated serfs to marry as they chose without the consent of their masters, and nearly all the unmarried adults hastened to take advantage of their newly-acquired privilege, though many of them had great difficulty in raising the capital necessary to pay the priest's fees. Then came the disorders among the peasantry, the death of the old master, and the removal of the family first to St. Petersburg, and afterwards to Germany. Anton's mind had never been of a very powerful order, and these great events had exercised a deleterious influence upon it. When Karl Karl'itch, at the expiry of the two years, informed him that he might now go where he chose, he replied, with a look of blank, unfeigned astonishment, "Where can I go to?" He had never conceived the possibility of being forced to earn his bread in some new way, and begged Karl Karl'itch to let him remain where he was. This request was readily granted, for Anton was an honest, faithful servant, and sincerely attached to the family, and it was accordingly arranged that he should receive a small monthly salary, and occupy an intermediate position between those of major-domo and head watch-dog.

Had Anton been transformed into a real watch-dog he could scarcely have slept more than he did. His power of sleeping, and his somnolence when he imagined he was awake, were his two most prominent characteristics. Out of consideration for his years and his love of repose, I troubled him as little as possible; but even the small amount of service which I demanded, he contrived to curtail in an ingenious way. The time and exertion required for traversing the intervening space between his own

room and mine might, he thought, be more profitably employed ; and accordingly he extemporized a bed in a small ante-chamber, close to my door, and there took up his permanent abode. If sonorous snoring be sufficient proof that the performer is asleep, then I venture to assert that Anton devoted about three-fourths of his time to sleeping, and a large part of the remaining fourth to yawning and elongated guttural ejaculations. At first this little arrangement considerably annoyed me, but I bore it patiently, and afterwards received my reward, for during my illness I found it very convenient to have an attendant within call. And I must do Anton the justice to say that he served me well in his own somnolent fashion. He seemed to have the faculty of hearing when asleep, and generally appeared in my room before he had succeeded in getting his eyes completely open.

Anton had never found time, during his long life, to form many opinions, but he had somehow imbibed or inhaled a few convictions, chiefly of a decidedly conservative kind, and one of these was that Feldshers were useless and dangerous members of society. Again and again he had advised me to have nothing to do with the one who visited me, and more than once he recommended to me an old woman of the name of Masha, who lived in a village a few miles off. Masha was what is known in Russia as a *Znakharka*—that is to say, a woman who is half witch, half medical practitioner—the whole permeated with a strong leaven of knavery. According to Anton, she could effect by means of herbs and charms every possible cure short of raising from the dead, and even with regard to this last operation he refrained from expressing an opinion.

The idea of being subjected to a course of herbs and charms by an old woman, who probably knew very little about the hidden properties of either, did not seem to me inviting, and more than once I flatly refused to have recourse to such unhallowed means. On due consideration, however, I thought that a professional interview with the old witch would be rather amusing, and then a brilliant idea occurred to me ! I should bring together the Feldsher and the *Znakharka*, who no doubt hated each other with a Kilkenny-cat hatred, and let them fight it out before me for the benefit of science and my own delectation. The evil propensities which before our enlightened age produced bull-baiting, cock-fighting, and pugilistic exhibitions are not yet, I fear, quite eradicated from human nature.

The more I thought of my project, the more I congratulated myself on having conceived a brilliant idea ; but, alas ! in this very imperfectly organized world of ours brilliant ideas are seldom realized, and in this case I was destined to be disappointed. Did the old woman's black art warn her of approaching danger, or was she simply actuated by a feeling of professional jealousy and considerations of professional etiquette ? To this question I can give no positive answer, but certain it is that she could not be induced to pay me a visit, and I was thus balked of my expected amusement. I succeeded, however, in learning indirectly something about the old witch. She enjoyed among her neighbors that solid, durable kind of respect which is founded on vague, undefinable fear, and was believed to have effected many remarkable cures. In the treatment of syphilitic diseases, which are fearfully common among the Russian peasantry, she was supposed to be specially successful, and I have no doubt, from the vague descriptions which I received, that the charm which she employed in these cases was of a mercurial kind. Some time afterwards I saw one of her victims. Whether she had succeeded in destroying the poison I know not, but she had at least succeeded in destroying most completely the patient's teeth. How women of this kind obtain mercury, and how they have discovered its medicinal properties, I cannot explain. Neither can I explain how they have come to know the peculiar properties of ergot of rye, which they frequently employ for illicit purposes, familiar to all students of medical jurisprudence.

The Znakharka and the Feldsher represent two very different periods in the history of medical science—the magical and the scientific. The Russian peasantry have still many conceptions which belong to the former. The great majority of them are already quite willing, under ordinary circumstances, to use the scientific means of healing ; but as soon as a violent epidemic breaks out, and the scientific means prove unequal to the occasion, the old faith revives, and recourse is had to magical rites and incantations. Of these rites many are very curious. Here, for instance, is one which was performed in a village near which I happened to be living in the summer of 1871. Cholera had been raging in the district for some time. In the village in question no case had yet occurred, but the inhabitants feared that the dreaded visitor would soon arrive, and the following ingenious

contrivance was adopted for warding off the danger. At midnight, when the male population was supposed to be asleep, all the maidens met in nocturnal costume, according to a preconcerted plan, in the outskirts of the village, and formed a procession. In front marched a girl, holding an Icon. Behind her came her companions, dragging a sokhá—the primitive plow commonly used by the peasantry—by means of a long rope. In this order the procession made the circuit of the entire village, and it was confidently believed that the cholera would not be able to overstep the magical circle thus described. Many of the males probably knew, or at least suspected, what was going on ; but they prudently remained within doors, knowing well that if they should be caught peeping indiscreetly at the mystic ceremony, they would be unmercifully beaten by those who were taking part in it.

This custom is doubtless a remnant of old pagan superstitions. The introduction of the Icon is a modern innovation, which illustrates that curious blending of paganism and Christianity which is often to be met with in Russia, and of which I shall have more to say some other time.

Sometimes, when an epidemic breaks out, the panic produced takes a more dangerous form. The people suspect that it is the work of the doctors, or that some ill-disposed persons have poisoned the wells, and will not believe that their own habitual disregard of the most simple sanitary precautions amply accounts for the phenomenon. I know of one case where an itinerant photographer was severely maltreated in consequence of such suspicions ; and once, in St. Petersburg, during the reign of Nicholas, a serious riot took place. The excited populace had already, it is said, thrown several doctors out of the windows of the hospital, when the Emperor arrived, unattended, in an open carriage, and quelled the disturbance by his simple presence, aided by his stentorian voice.

Of the ignorant credulity of the Russian peasantry I might relate many curious illustrations. The most absurd rumors sometimes awaken consternation throughout a whole district. One of the most common reports of this kind is that a female conscription is about to take place. About the time of the Duke of Edinburgh's marriage this report was specially frequent. A large number of young girls were to be sent, it was said, to England in a red ship. Why the ship was to be painted red, and what was

to be done with the Russian maidens when they should arrive at their destination, I never succeeded in discovering. Perhaps it was that the people confounded Queen Victoria with the King of Dahomey, or imagined that we were about to adopt that potentate's peculiar military organization ; or perhaps it was, as one peasant explained, simply because it was supposed that there were very few women in England. This false conception might have been corrected by a landed proprietor whom I once met, and from whom I learned that about one-third of the entire population of the British Isles was composed of unfortunate spinsters condemned to celibacy by the paucity of the male population.

The most amusing instance of credulity which I can recall was the following, related to me by a peasant-woman who came from the village in question. One day in winter, about the time of sunset, a peasant-family was startled by the entrance of a strange visitor—a female figure, dressed as St. Barbara is commonly represented in the religious pictures. All present were very much astonished by this apparition ; but the figure told them, in a low, soft voice, to be of good cheer, for she was St. Barbara, and had come to honor them with a visit as a reward for their piety. The peasant thus favored was not remarkable for his piety, but he did not consider it necessary to correct the mistake of his saintly visitor, and requested her to be seated. With perfect readiness she accepted the invitation, and began at once to discourse in an edifying way. Meanwhile the news of this wonderful apparition spread like wildfire, and all the inhabitants of the village, as well as those of a neighboring village about a mile distant, collected in and around the house of the favored family. Whether the priest was among those who came my informant did not know. Many of those who had come could not get within hearing, but those at the outskirts of the crowd hoped that the saints might come out before disappearing. Their hopes were gratified. About midnight the mysterious visitor announced that she would go and bring St. Nicholas, the miracle-worker, and requested all to remain perfectly still during her absence. The crowd respectfully made way for her, and she passed out into the darkness. With breathless expectation all awaited the arrival of St. Nicholas, who is the favorite saint of the Russian peasantry ; but hours passed, and he did not appear. At last, towards sunrise, some of the less zealous spectators began to return home, and those of them who

had come from the neighboring village discovered to their horror that during their absence their horses had been stolen ! At once they raised the hue-and-cry ; and the peasants scoured the country in all directions in search of the *soi-disant* St. Barbara and her accomplices, but they never recovered the stolen property. “ And serve them right, the blockheads ! ” added my informant, who had herself escaped falling into the trap by being absent from the village at the time.

It is but fair to add that the Russian peasantry, though in some respects extremely credulous, and, like all other people, subject to occasional panics, are by no means easily frightened by real dangers. Those who have seen them under fire will readily credit this statement. For my own part, I have had opportunities of observing them merely in danger of a non-military kind, and have often admired the perfect coolness displayed. Even an epidemic alarms them only when it attains a certain degree of intensity. Once I had a good opportunity of observing this on board a large steamer on the Volga. It was a very hot day in the early autumn of 1872. As it was well known that there was a great deal of Asiatic cholera all over the country, prudent people refrained from eating much raw fruit ; but Russian peasants are not generally prudent men, and I noticed that those on board were consuming enormous quantities of raw cucumbers and water-melons. This imprudence was soon followed by its natural punishment. I refrain from describing the scene that ensued, but I may say that those who were attacked received from the others every possible assistance. Had no unforeseen accident happened, we should have arrived at Kazan on the following morning, and been able to send the patients to the hospital of that town ; but as there was little water in the river, we had to cast anchor for the night, and next morning we ran aground and stuck fast. Here we had to remain patiently till a smaller steamer hove in sight. All this time there was not the slightest symptom of panic, and when the small steamer came alongside there was no frantic rush to get away from the infected vessel, though it was quite evident that only a small number of the passengers could be taken off. Those who were nearest the gangway went quietly on board the small steamer, and those who were less fortunate remained patiently till another steamer happened to pass.

The old conceptions of disease, as something that may be most

successfully cured by charms and similar means, are rapidly disappearing. The Zemstvo—that is to say, the new local self-government—has done much towards this end by enabling the people to procure better medical attendance. In all, or nearly all, the towns there are public hospitals, which are—or at least seem to an unprofessional eye—in a very satisfactory condition. In many of these the resident doctor is daily besieged by a crowd of peasants, who come from far and near to ask advice and receive medicines. Besides this, in some provinces, Feldshers are placed in the principal villages, and the doctor makes frequent tours of inspection. The doctors are generally well-educated men, and do a large amount of work for a not very large remuneration.

Of the lunatic asylums, which are generally attached to the larger hospitals, I cannot speak very favorably. Some of them, indeed, such as the great central asylum near Kazan, are all that could be desired, but others are badly constructed and fearfully over-crowded. One or two of those I visited appeared to me to be conducted on very patriarchal principles, as the following incident may illustrate.

I had been visiting a large hospital, and had remained there so long that it was already dark before I reached the adjacent lunatic asylum. Seeing no lights in the windows I proposed to my companion, who was one of the inspectors, that we should delay our visit till the following morning, but he assured me that by the regulations the lights ought not to be extinguished till considerably later, and consequently there was no objection to our going in at once. If there was no legal objection, there was at least a physical obstruction in the form of a large wooden door, and all our efforts to attract the attention of the porter or some other inmate were unavailing. At last, after much ringing, knocking, and shouting, a voice from within asked us who we were and what we wanted. A brief reply from my companion, not couched in the most polite or amiable terms, made the bolts rattle and the door open with surprising velocity, and we saw before us an old man with long disheveled hair, who, as far as appearance went, might have been one of the lunatics, bowing obsequiously and muttering apologies. After groping our way along a dark corridor we entered a still darker room, and the door was closed and locked behind us. As the key turned in the rusty lock a wild scream rang through the darkness! Then came a yell, then a howl, and

then various sounds which the poverty of the English language prevents me from designating—the whole blending into a hideous discord that would have been at home in some of the worst regions of Dante's *Inferno*. As to the cause of it I could not even form a conjecture. Gradually my eyes became accustomed to the darkness, and I could perceive dimly white figures flitting about the room. Then I felt something standing near me, and close to my shoulder I saw a pair of eyes and long streaming hair. On my other side, equally close, was something very like a woman's night-cap. Though by no means of a nervous temperament, I felt uncomfortable. To be shut up in a dark room with an indefinite number of excited maniacs is not a comfortable position. How long my imprisonment lasted I know not—probably not more than two or three minutes, but it seemed a long time. At last a light was procured, and the whole affair was explained. The guardians, not expecting the visit of an inspector at so late an hour, had put out the lights and retired for the night much earlier than usual. The opening of the door had awakened one of the unfortunate inmates of the room where we were, and her hysterical scream had terrified the others.

By the influence of asylums, hospitals, and similar institutions, the old conceptions of disease, as I have said, are gradually dying out, but the *Znakharka* still finds practice. The fact that the *Znakharka* and the *Feldsher* are to be found side by side is very characteristic of Russian civilization, which is a strange conglomeration of products belonging to very different periods. The student who undertakes the study of it will sometimes be scarcely less surprised than would be the naturalist who should unexpectedly stumble upon antediluvian megatheria grazing tranquilly in the field with prize Southdowns. He will find the most primitive institutions side by side with the latest products of French doctrinarianism, and the most childish superstitions in close proximity with the most advanced free-thinking. At one moment he will find himself in the far-distant past, and at the next he may unexpectedly come upon a road that looks very like a short cut into the unknown future.

CHAPTER VI.

A PEASANT FAMILY OF THE OLD TYPE.

Ivan Petroff—His Past Life—Co-operative Associations—Constitution of a Peasant Household—Predominance of Economic Conceptions over those of Blood-relationship—Peasant Marriages—Advantages of living in Large Families—Its Defects—Family Disruptions and their Consequences.

MY illness had at least one good result. It brought me into contact with the Feldsher, and through him after my recovery I made the acquaintance of several peasants living in the village. Of these by far the most interesting was an old man called Ivan Petroff.

Ivan must have been about sixty years of age, but was still robust and strong, and had the reputation of being able to mow more hay in a given time than any other peasant in the village. His head would have made a fine study for a portrait-painter. Like Russian peasants in general, he wore his hair parted in the middle—a custom which perhaps owes its origin to the religious pictures. The reverend appearance given to his face by his long fair beard, slightly tinged with gray, was in part counteracted by his eyes, which had a strange twinkle in them—whether of humor or of roguery, it was difficult to say. Under all circumstances—whether in his light, nondescript summer costume, or in his warm sheep-skin, or in the long, glossy, dark-blue, double-breasted coat which he put on occasionally on Sundays and holidays—he always looked a well-fed, respectable, well-to-do member of society; whilst his imperturbable composure, and the entire absence of obsequiousness or truculence in his manner, indicated plainly that he possessed no small amount of calm, deep-rooted self-respect. A stranger, on seeing him, might readily have leaped to the conclusion that he must be the Village Elder, but in reality he was a simple member of the Commune, like his neighbor, poor Zakhar

Leshkof, who never let slip an opportunity of getting drunk, was always in debt and difficulties, and, on the whole, possessed a more than dubious reputation. Ivan had, it is true, been Village Elder some years before. When elected by the Village Assembly against his own wishes, he had said quietly, "Very well, children; I will serve my three years;" and at the end of that period, when the Assembly wished to re-elect him, he had answered firmly, "No, children; I have served my time. It is now the turn of some one who is younger, and has more time. There's Peter Alekseyef, a good fellow, and an honest: you may choose him." And the Assembly chose the peasant indicated; for Ivan, though a simple member of the Commune, had more influence in Communal affairs than any other half-dozen members put together. No grave matter was decided without his being consulted, and there was at least one instance on record of the Village Assembly postponing deliberations for a week because he happened to be absent in St. Petersburg.

No stranger casually meeting Ivan would ever for a moment have suspected that that big man, of calm, commanding aspect, had been during a greater part of his life a serf. And yet a serf he had been, from his birth till he was about forty years of age—not merely a serf of the State, but the serf of a proprietor who had lived habitually on his property. For forty years of his life he had been dependent on the arbitrary will of a master, who had the legal power to flog him as often and as severely as he considered desirable. In reality, however, he had never been subjected to corporal punishment, for the proprietor to whom he had belonged had been, though in some respects severe, a just and intelligent master.

Ivan's bright and intelligent face had early attracted the master's attention, and it was accordingly decided that he should learn a trade. For this purpose he was sent to Moscow, and apprenticed there to a carpenter. After four years of apprenticeship he was able not only to earn his own bread, but to help the household in the payment of their taxes, and to pay annually to his master a fixed yearly sum—first ten, then twenty, then thirty, and ultimately, for some years immediately before the Emancipation in 1861, seventy roubles—that is to say, seventy of the old paper roubles, or about twenty "roubles silver," as the new paper roubles are commonly termed. In return for this annual sum he was free

to work and wander about as he pleased, and for some years he had made ample use of his conditional liberty. I never succeeded in extracting from him a chronological account of his travels, but I could gather from his occasional remarks that he had wandered over a great part of European Russia. Evidently he had been in his youth what is colloquially termed "a roving blade," and had by no means confined himself to the trade which he had learned during his four years of apprenticeship. At one time he had helped to navigate a raft from Vetluga to Astrakhan, a distance of about two thousand miles. At another time he had been at Arkangel and Onega, on the shores of the White Sea. St. Petersburg and Moscow were both well known to him, and once at least he had visited Odessa. The precise nature of his occupations during these wanderings I could not ascertain; for, with all his openness of manner, he was extremely reticent regarding his commercial affairs. To all my inquiries on this topic he replied vaguely, "*Lesnoe dyelo*"—that is to say, "A wood affair;" and from this I concluded that his chief occupation had been that of a timber merchant. Indeed, when I knew him, though he was no longer a regular trader, it was well known that he was always ready to buy any bit of forest that could be bought in the vicinity for a reasonable price. His reticence regarding his commercial transactions was probably learned from the regular traders, who are always very reluctant to communicate anything regarding their mercantile affairs.

During all this nomadic period of his life, Ivan had never entirely severed his connection with his home or with agricultural life. When about the age of twenty he had spent several months at home, taking part in the field labor, and had married a wife—a strong, healthy young woman, who had been selected for him by his mother, and strongly recommended in consideration of her good character and her physical strength. In the opinion of Ivan's mother, beauty was a kind of luxury which only nobles and rich merchants could afford, and ordinary comeliness was a very secondary consideration—so secondary as to be left almost entirely out of sight. This was likewise the opinion of Ivan's wife. She had never been comely herself, she used to say, but she had been a good wife to her husband. He had never complained about her want of good looks, and had never gone after those who were considered good-looking. In expressing this opinion she always first

bent forward, then drew herself up to her full length, and finally gave a little jerky nod sideways, so as to clench the statement. Then Ivan's bright eye would twinkle more brightly than usual, and he would ask her how she knew that—reminding her that he was not always at home. This was Ivan's stereotyped mode of teasing his wife, and every time he employed it he was called an "old scarecrow," or something of the kind.

Perhaps, however, Ivan's joecular remark had more significance in it than his wife cared to admit, for during the first years of their married life they had seen very little of each other. A few days after the marriage, when according to our notions the honeymoon should be at its height, Ivan had gone to Moscow for several months, leaving his young bride to the care of his father and mother. The young bride did not consider this an extraordinary hardship, for many of her companions had been treated in the same way, and according to public opinion in that part of the country there was nothing abnormal in the proceeding. Indeed, it may be said in general that there is very little romance or sentimentality about Russian peasant marriages. The wife is taken as a helpmate, or in plain language a worker, rather than as a companion, and the mother-in-law leaves her very little time to indulge in useless regrets and fruitless dreaming.

As time wore on, and his father became older and frailer, Ivan's visits to his native place became longer and more frequent, and when the old man was at last incapable of work, Ivan settled down permanently and undertook the direction of the household. In the meantime his own children had been growing up. When I knew the family it comprised—besides two daughters who had married early and gone to live with their parents-in-law—Ivan and his wife, two sons, three daughters-in-law, and an indefinite and frequently varying number of grandchildren. The fact that there were three daughters-in-law and only two sons was the result of the Conscription, which had taken away the youngest son shortly after his marriage. The two who remained spent only a small part of the year at home. The one was a carpenter and the other a bricklayer, and both wandered about the country in search of employment as their father had done in his younger days. There was, however, one difference. The father had always shown a leaning towards commercial transactions, rather than the simple practice of his handicraft, and consequently he had usually lived

and traveled alone. The sons, on the contrary, confined themselves to their handicrafts, and were always during the working season members of *artéls*.

The *artél* in its various forms is a curious institution. Those to which Ivan's sons belonged were simply temporary, itinerant associations of workmen, who during the summer lived together, fed together, worked together, and on the termination of each bit of work divided amongst themselves the profits. This is the primitive form of the institution, and is now not very often met with. Here, as elsewhere, capital has made itself felt, and destroyed that equality which exists among the members of an *artél* in the above sense of the word. Instead of forming themselves into a temporary association, the workmen now generally make an engagement with a contractor who has a little capital, and receive from him fixed monthly wages. According to this arrangement the risk is less and the wages are smaller, and if any exceptional profit accrues from the undertaking it goes into the pocket of the contractor, in compensation for the exceptional losses which he may have to bear. The only association which exists in this case is for the purchase and preparation of provisions, and even these duties are very often left to the contractor.

In some of the larger towns there are *artéls* of a much more complex kind—permanent associations, possessing a large capital, and pecuniarily responsible for the acts of the individual members. Of these, by far the most celebrated is that of the Bank Porters. These men have unlimited opportunities of stealing, and are often intrusted with the guarding or transporting of enormous sums; but the banker has no cause for anxiety, because he knows that if any defalcations occur they will be made good to him by the *artél*. Such accidents, however, rarely if ever happen, and the fact is by no means so extraordinary as many people suppose. The *artél*, being responsible for the individuals of which it is composed, is very careful in admitting new members, and a man when admitted is closely watched, not only by the regularly constituted office-bearers, but also by all his fellow-members who have an opportunity of observing him. If he begins to spend money too freely or to neglect his duties, though his employer may know nothing of the fact, suspicions are at once aroused among his fellow-members, and an investigation ensues—ending in summary expulsion if the suspicions prove to have been well-founded.

Mutual responsibility, in short, creates naturally a very effective system of mutual supervision. Might not some of our employers of labor, who complain loudly of the carelessness and dishonesty of their servants, make some practical use of this principle ?

Of Ivan's two sons, the one who was a carpenter by trade visited his family only occasionally, and at irregular intervals ; the other, on the contrary, as building is impossible in Russia during the cold weather, spent the greater part of the winter at home. Both of them paid a large part of their earnings into the family treasury, over which their father exercised uncontrolled authority. If he wished to make any considerable outlay, he always consulted his sons on the subject, but as he was a prudent, intelligent man, and enjoyed the respect and confidence of the family, he never met with any decided opposition. All the field work was performed by him with the assistance of his daughters-in-law ; only at harvest time he hired one or two laborers to help him.

Ivan's household was a good specimen of the Russian peasant family of the old type. Previous to the Emancipation in 1861, there were many households of this kind, containing the representatives of three generations. All the members, young and old, lived together in patriarchal fashion under the direction and authority of the Head of the House, called usually *Khozain*, that is to say, the Administrator ; or, in some districts, *Bolshák*, which means literally "the Big One." Generally speaking, this important position was occupied by the grandfather, or, if he was dead, by the eldest brother, but this rule was not very strictly observed. If, for instance, the grandfather became infirm, or if the eldest brother was incapacitated by disorderly habits or other cause, the place of authority was taken by some other member—it might be by a woman—who was a good manager, and possessed the greatest moral influence. The relations between the Head of the Household and the other members depended on custom and personal character, and they consequently varied greatly in different families. If the Big One was an intelligent man, of decided, energetic character, like my friend Ivan, there was probably perfect discipline in the house, except perhaps in the matter of female tongues, which do not readily submit to the authority even of their owners ; but very often it happened that the Big One was not thoroughly well fitted for his post, and in that case endless quarrels and bickerings inevitably took place. Those quarrels

were generally caused and fomented by the female members of the household—a fact which will not seem strange if we try to realize how difficult it must be for several sisters-in-law to live together, with their children and a mother-in-law, within the narrow limits of a peasant's house. The complaints of the young bride, who finds that her mother-in-law puts all the hard work on her shoulders, form a favorite motive in the popular poetry.

The house, with its appurtenances, the cattle, the agricultural implements, the grain and other products, the money gained from the sale of these products—in a word, the house and nearly everything it contained—was the joint-property of the family. Hence, nothing was bought or sold by any member—not even by the Big One himself, unless he possessed an unusual amount of authority—without the express or tacit consent of the other grown-up males, and all the money that was earned was put into the common purse. When one of the sons left home to work elsewhere, he was expected to bring or send home all his earnings, except what he required for food, lodgings, and other *necessary* expenses; and if he understood the word “necessary” in too lax a sense, he had to listen to very plain-spoken reproaches when he returned. During his absence, which might last for a whole year or several years, his wife and children remained in the house as before, and the money which he earned was probably devoted to the payment of the family taxes.

The peasant household of the old type is thus a primitive labor association, of which the members have all things in common, and it is not a little remarkable that the peasant conceives it as such rather than as a family. This is shown by the customary terminology and by the law of inheritance. The Head of the Household is not called by any word corresponding to *Paterfamilias*, but is termed, as I have said, *Khozaïn*, or Administrator—a word that is applied equally to a farmer, a shopkeeper, or the head of an industrial undertaking, and does not at all convey the idea of blood-relationship.

The law of inheritance is likewise based on this conception. When a household is broken up, the degree of blood-relationship is not taken into consideration in the distribution of the property. All the adult male members share equally. Illegitimate and adopted sons, if they have contributed their share of labor, have the same rights as the sons born in lawful wedlock. The

married daughter, on the contrary—being regarded as belonging to her husband's family—and the son who has previously separated himself from the household, are excluded from the succession. Strictly speaking, there is no succession or inheritance whatever, except as regards the wearing apparel and any little personal effects of a similar kind. The house and all that it contains belong not to the Khozaïn, but to the little household community; and, consequently, when the Khozaïn dies and the community is broken up, the members do not inherit, but merely appropriate individually what they had hitherto possessed collectively. Thus there is properly no inheritance or succession, but simply liquidation and distribution of the property among the members. The written law of inheritance, founded on the conception of personal property, is quite unknown to the peasantry, and quite inapplicable to their mode of life. In this way a large and most important section of the Code remains a dead letter for about four-fifths of the population!

This predominance of practical economic considerations is likewise exemplified by the way in which marriages are arranged in these large families.

In all respects the Russian peasantry are, as a class, extremely practical and matter-of-fact in their conceptions and habits, and are not at all prone to indulge in sublime, ethereal sentiments of any kind. They have little or nothing of what may be roughly termed the Hermann-and-Dorothea element in their composition, and consequently they know very little about those sentimental, romantic ideas which we habitually associate with the preliminary steps to matrimony. This fact is so patent to all who have studied the Russian peasantry, that even those who have endeavored to idealize peasant life have rarely ventured to make their story turn on a sentimental love affair. These general remarks I insert here parenthetically, in order that the reader may more clearly understand what I have to say regarding peasant marriages.

In the primitive system of agriculture usually practiced in Russia, the natural labor-unit—if it be allowed to use such a term—comprises a man, a woman, and a horse. As soon, therefore, as a boy becomes an able-bodied laborer he ought to be provided with the two accessories necessary for the completion of the labor-unit. To procure a horse, either by purchase or by rearing a foal, is the duty of the Head of the House; to procure a wife

for the youth is the duty of "the female Big One" (*bolshúkha*). And the chief consideration in determining the choice is in both cases the same. Prudent domestic administrators are not to be tempted by showy horses or beautiful brides; what they seek is not beauty, but physical strength and capacity for work. When the youth reaches the age of eighteen he is informed that he ought to marry at once, and as soon as he gives his consent negotiations are opened with the parents of some eligible young person. In the larger villages the negotiations are sometimes facilitated by certain old women called *svakhi*, who occupy themselves specially with this kind of mediation; but very often the affair is arranged directly by, or through the agency of, some common friend of the two houses. Care must of course be taken that there is no legal obstacle to the marriage, and these obstacles are not always easily avoided in a small village, the inhabitants of which have been long in the habit of intermarrying. According to Russian ecclesiastical law, not only is marriage between first-cousins illegal, but affinity is considered as equivalent to consanguinity—that is to say, a mother-in-law and a sister-in-law are regarded as a mother and a sister—and even the fictitious relationship created by standing together at the baptismal font as godfather and godmother is legally recognized. If all the preliminary negotiations are successful, the marriage takes place, and the bridegroom brings his bride home to the house of which he is a member. She brings nothing with her as a dowry except her trousseau, but she brings a pair of good strong arms, and thereby enriches her adopted family. Of course it happens occasionally—for human nature is everywhere essentially the same—that a young peasant falls in love with one of his former playmates, and brings his little romance to a happy conclusion at the altar; but such cases are very rare, and as a rule it may be said that the marriages of the Russian peasantry are arranged under the influence of economic rather than sentimental considerations.

The custom of living in large families has many decided economic advantages. We all know the edifying fable of the dying man who showed to his sons by means of a piece of wicker-work the advantages of living together and mutually assisting each other. In ordinary times the necessary expenses of a large household of ten members are considerably less than the combined expenses of two households comprising five members each, and when

a "black day" comes, a large family can bear temporary adversity much more successfully than a small one. These are principles of world-wide application, and in the life of the Russian peasantry they have a peculiar force. Each adult peasant possesses, as I shall hereafter explain, a share of the Communal land, but this share is not sufficient to occupy all his time and working power. One married pair can easily cultivate two shares—at least in all provinces where land is not very abundant. Now if a family is composed of two married couples, one of the men can go elsewhere and earn money, whilst the other, with his wife and sister-in-law, can cultivate the two combined shares of land. If, on the contrary, a family consists merely of one pair with their children, the man must either remain at home, in which case he may have difficulty in finding work for the whole of his time, or he must leave home, and intrust the cultivation of his share of the land to his wife, whose time must be in great part devoted to domestic affairs.

In the time of serfage the proprietors clearly perceived these and similar advantages, and compelled their serfs to live together in large families. No family could be broken up without the proprietor's consent, and this consent was not easily obtained unless the family had assumed quite abnormal proportions, and was permanently disturbed by domestic dissension. In the matrimonial affairs of the serfs, too, the majority of the proprietors systematically exercised a certain supervision, not necessarily from any paltry, meddling spirit, but because their material interests were thereby affected. A proprietor would not, for instance, allow the daughter of one of his serfs to marry a serf belonging to another proprietor—because he would thereby lose a female laborer—unless some compensation were offered. The compensation might be a sum of money, or the affair might be arranged on the principle of reciprocity, by the master of the bridegroom allowing one of his female serfs to marry a serf belonging to the master of the bride.

However advantageous the custom of living in large families may appear when regarded from the economic point of view, it has very serious defects, both theoretical and practical.

That families connected by the ties of blood-relationship and marriage can easily live together in harmony is one of those social axioms which are accepted universally and believed by nobody.

We all know by our own experience, or by that of others, that the friendly relations of two such families are greatly endangered by proximity of habitation. To live in the same street is not advisable ; to occupy adjoining houses is positively dangerous ; and to live under the same roof is certainly fatal to prolonged amity. There may be the very best intentions on both sides, and the arrangement may be inaugurated by the most gushing expressions of undying affection and by the discovery of innumerable secret affinities, but neither affinities, affection, nor good intentions can withstand the constant friction and occasional jerks which inevitably ensue. Now the reader must endeavor to realize that Russian peasants, even when clad in sheep-skins, are human beings like ourselves. Though they are often represented as abstract entities—as figures in a table of statistics or dots on a diagram—they have in reality “organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions.” If not exactly “fed with the same food,” they are at least “hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means,” and liable to be irritated by the same annoyances as we are. And those of them who live in large families are subjected to a kind of probation that most of us have never dreamed of. The families comprising a large household not only live together, but have nearly all things in common. Each member works not for himself, but for the household, and all that he earns is expected to go into the family treasury. The arrangement almost inevitably leads to one of two results—either there are continual dissensions or order is preserved by a powerful domestic tyranny infinitely worse than serfage.

It was quite natural, therefore, that when the authority of the landed proprietors was abolished in 1861, the large peasant families almost all fell to pieces. The arbitrary rule of the Khozaïn was based on, and maintained by, the arbitrary rule of the proprietor, and both naturally fell together. Households like that of our friend Ivan have been preserved only in exceptional cases, where the Head of the House happened to possess an unusual amount of moral influence over the other members. This change has unquestionably had a prejudicial influence on the material welfare of the peasantry, but it must have added considerably to their domestic comfort, and can scarcely fail to produce good moral results. For the present, however, the evil consequences are by far the most prominent. Every married peasant strives to have

a house of his own, and many of them, in order to defray the necessary expenses, have been obliged to contract debts. This is a very serious matter. Even if the peasants could obtain money at five or six per cent., the position of the debtors would be bad enough, but it is in reality much worse, for the village usurers consider twenty or twenty-five per cent. a by no means exorbitant rate of interest. Thus the peasant who contracts debts has a hard struggle to pay the interest in ordinary times, and when some misfortune overtakes him—when, for instance, the harvest is bad or his horse is stolen—he probably falls hopelessly into pecuniary embarrassments. I have seen peasants not specially addicted to drunkenness or other ruinous habits sink to a helpless state of insolvency. Fortunately for such insolvent debtors, they are treated by the law with extreme leniency. Their house, their share of the common land, their agricultural implements, their horse—in a word, all that is necessary for their subsistence, is exempt from sequestration. The Commune may, however, subject them to corporal punishment if they do not pay their taxes, and in many other respects the position of a peasant who is protected against utter destitution merely by the law is very far from being enviable.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PEASANTRY OF THE NORTH.

Communal Land—System of Agriculture—Parish Fêtes—Fasting—Winter Occupations—Yearly Migrations—Domestic Industries—Influence of Capital and Wholesale Enterprise—The State Peasants—Domestic Serfs and Serfs properly so-called—Serf-dues—Buckle's "History of Civilization"—"People who play Pranks"—The Far North.

IVÁNÓFKA may be taken as a fair specimen of the villages in the northern half of the country, and a brief description of its inhabitants will convey a tolerably correct notion of the northern peasantry in general.

Nearly the whole of the female population, and about one-half of the male inhabitants, are habitually engaged in cultivating the Communal land, which comprises about two thousand acres of a light sandy soil. The arable part of this land is divided into three large fields, each of which is cut up into long narrow strips. The first field is reserved for the winter grain—that is to say, rye, which forms, in the shape of black bread, the principal food of the peasantry. In the second are raised oats for the horses, and buckwheat, which is largely used for food. The third lies fallow, and is used in the summer as pasturage for the cattle.

All the villagers in this part of the country divide the arable land in this way, in order to suit the triennial rotation of crops. This triennial system is extremely simple. The field which is used this year for raising winter grain will be used next year for raising summer grain, and in the following year will lie fallow. Before being sown with winter grain it ought to receive a certain amount of manure. Every family possesses in each of the two fields under cultivation one or more of the long, narrow strips or belts into which they are divided.

The annual life of the peasantry is that of simple husbandmen, inhabiting a country where the winter is long and severe. The

agricultural year begins in April with the melting of the snow. Nature has been lying dormant for some months. Awakening now from her long sleep, and throwing off her white mantle, she strives to make up for lost time. No sooner has the snow disappeared than the fresh young grass begins to shoot up, and very soon afterwards the shrubs and trees begin to bud. The rapidity of this transition from winter to spring astonishes the inhabitants of more temperate climes.

On St. George's Day (April 23rd*), the cattle are brought out for the first time and sprinkled with holy water by the priest. The cattle of the Russian peasantry are never very fat, but at this period of the year their appearance is truly lamentable. During the winter they have been cooped up in small unventilated cow-houses, and fed almost exclusively on straw; now, when they are released from their imprisonment, they look like the ghosts of their former emaciated selves. All are lean and weak, many are lame, and some cannot rise to their feet without assistance.

Meanwhile the peasants are impatient to begin the field labor. An old proverb which they all know says: "Sow in mud and you will be a prince;" and they always act in accordance with this dictate of traditional wisdom. As soon as it is possible to plow they begin to prepare the land for the summer grain, and this labor occupies them probably till the end of May. Then comes the work of carting out manure and preparing the fallow field for the winter grain, which will last probably till about St. Peter's Day (June 29th), when the hay-making generally begins. After the hay-making comes the harvest, by far the busiest time of the year. From the middle of July—especially from St. Elijah's Day (July 20th), when the saint is usually heard rumbling along the heavens in his chariot of fire†—until the end of August, the peasant may work day and night, and yet he will find that he has barely time to get all his work done. In little more than a month he has to reap and stack his grain—rye, oats, and whatever else he may have sown either in spring or in the preceding autumn—and to sow the winter grain for next year. To add to his troubles, it

* With regard to saints' days, I always give the date according to the old style. To find the date according to our calendar, twelve days must be added.

† It is thus that the peasants explain the thunder, which is often heard at that season

sometimes happens that the rye and the oats ripen almost simultaneously, and his position is then still more difficult than usual.

Whether the seasons favor him or not, the peasant has at this time a hard task, for he can rarely afford to hire the requisite number of laborers, and has generally the assistance merely of his wife and family; but he can at this season work for a short time at high pressure, for he has the prospect of soon obtaining a good rest and an abundance of food. About the end of September the field labor is finished, and on the first day of October the harvest festival begins—a joyous season, during which the parish fêtes are commonly celebrated.

To celebrate a parish fête in true orthodox fashion it is necessary to prepare beforehand a large quantity of *braga*—a kind of home-brewed small beer—and to bake a plentiful supply of *piroghí* or pies. Oil, too, has to be procured, and vodka (rye spirit) in goodly quantity. At the same time the big room of the *izbá*, as the peasant's house is called, has to be cleared, the floor washed, and the table and benches scrubbed. The evening before the fête, while the *piroghí* are being baked, a little lamp burns before the Icon in the corner of the room, and perhaps one or two guests from a distance arrive in order that they may have on the morrow a full day's enjoyment.

On the morning of the fête the proceedings begin by a long service in the church, at which all the inhabitants are present in their best holiday costumes, except those matrons and young women who remain at home to prepare the dinner. About mid-day dinner is served in each *izbá* for the family and their friends. In general the Russian peasant's fare is of the simplest kind, and rarely comprises animal food of any sort—not from any vegetarian proclivities, but merely because beef, mutton, and pork are too expensive; but on a holiday, such as a parish fête, there is always on the dinner-table a considerable variety of dishes. In the house of a well-to-do peasant there will be not only greasy cabbage-soup and *kasha*—a dish made from buckwheat—but also pork, mutton, and perhaps even beef. *Braga* will be supplied in unlimited quantities, and more than once vodka will be handed round. When the repast is finished, all rise together, and, turning towards the Icon in the corner, bow and cross themselves repeatedly. The guests then say to their host, “*Spasibo za khleb za sol*”—that is

to say, "Thanks for your hospitality," or more literally, "Thanks for bread and salt;" and the host replies, "Do not be displeased, sit down once more for good luck"—or perhaps he puts the last part of his request into the form of a rhyming couplet to the following effect: "Sit down, that the hens may brood, and that the chickens and bees may multiply!" All obey this request, and there is another round of vodka.

After dinner some stroll about, chatting with their friends, or go to sleep in some shady nook, whilst those who wish to make merry go to the spot where the young people are singing, playing, and amusing themselves in various ways. As the sun sinks towards the horizon, the more grave, staid guests wend their way homewards, but many remain for supper; and as evening advances the effects of the vodka become more and more apparent. Sounds of revelry are heard more frequently from the houses, and a large proportion of the inhabitants and guests appear on the road in various degrees of intoxication. Some of these vow eternal affection to their friends, or with flaccid gestures and in incoherent tones harangue invisible audiences; others stagger about aimlessly in besotted self-contentment, till they drop down in a state of complete unconsciousness. There they will lie tranquilly till they are picked up by their less intoxicated friends, or more probably till they awake of their own accord on the next morning.

As a whole, a village fête in Russia is one of the most saddening spectacles I have ever witnessed. It affords a new proof—where, alas! no new proof was required—that we northern nations, who know so well how to work, are utterly incapable of amusing ourselves. In France or Italy a popular holiday is a pleasing sight, and may easily make us regret that life has so few holidays. Not only in the morning, but also in the evening, after a long day, there is a bright, joyous expression on every face, and a hum of genuine merriment rises continually from the crowd. In northern countries, on the contrary, the people do not know how to enjoy themselves in a harmless, rational way, and seek a refuge in intoxication, so that the sight of a popular holiday may make us regret that life has any holidays at all.

If the Russian peasant's food were always as good and plentiful as at this season of the year, he would have little reason to complain; but this is by no means the case. Gradually, as the har-

vest-time recedes, it deteriorates in quality, and sometimes diminishes in quantity. Besides this, during a great part of the year the peasant is prevented from using much that he possesses by the rules of the Church.

In southern climes, where these rules were elaborated and first practiced, the prescribed fasts are perhaps useful not only in a religious, but also in a sanitary sense. Having abundance of fruit and vegetables, the inhabitants do well, perhaps, in abstaining occasionally from animal food. But in countries like Northern and Central Russia, the influence of these rules is very different. The Russian peasant cannot obtain as much animal food as he requires, whilst sour cabbage and cucumbers are probably the only vegetables he can procure, and fruit of any kind is for him an unattainable luxury. Under these circumstances, abstinence from eggs and milk in all their forms during several months of the year seems to the secular mind a superfluous bit of asceticism. If the Church would direct her maternal solicitude to the peasant's drinking, and leave him to eat what he pleases, she might exercise a beneficial influence on his material and moral welfare. Unfortunately she has a great deal too much inherent immobility to do anything of the kind, and there is no reasonable probability of her ever arriving at the simple truth, for which there is very high authority, that rules and ordinances were made for man, and not man for the rules and ordinances. Meanwhile, the Russian peasant must fast during the seven weeks of Lent, during two or three weeks in June, from the beginning of November till Christmas, and on all Wednesdays and Fridays during the remainder of the year.

From the festival time till the following spring there is no possibility of doing any agricultural work, for the ground is hard as iron, and covered with a deep layer of snow. The male peasants, therefore, who remain in the villages, have very little to do, and may spend the greater part of their time in lying idly on the stove, unless they happen to have learned some handicraft that can be practiced at home. Formerly, many of them were employed in transporting the grain to the market town, which might be several hundred miles distant; but now this species of occupation has been greatly diminished by the extension of railways.

Another winter occupation which was formerly practiced, and has now almost fallen into disuse, was that of stealing wood in the

forest. This was, according to peasant morality, no sin, or at most a very venial offense, for God planted and watered the trees, and therefore forests belong properly to no one. So thought the peasantry, but the landed proprietors and the Administration of the Demesnes held a different theory of property, and consequently precautions had to be taken to avoid detection. In order to insure success it was necessary to choose a night when there was a violent snow-storm, which would immediately obliterate all traces of the expedition ; and when such a night was found, the operation was commonly performed with success. During the hours of darkness a tree would be felled, stripped of its branches, dragged into the village, and cut up into firewood, and at sunrise the actors would be tranquilly sleeping on the stove as if they had spent the night at home. In recent years the justices of the peace have done much towards putting down this practice and eradicating the loose conceptions of property with which it was connected.

For the female part of the population winter is a busy time, for it is during these four or five months that the spinning and weaving have to be done.

In many of the northern villages the tedium of the long winter evenings is relieved by so-called Besyedy, a word which signifies literally conversazioni. A Besyeda, however, is not exactly a conversazione as we understand the term, but resembles rather what is by some ladies called a Dorcas meeting, with this essential difference, that those present work for themselves and not for any benevolent purpose. In some villages as many as three Besyedy regularly assemble about sunset : one for the children, the second for the young people, and the third for the matrons. Each of the three has its peculiar character. In the first, the children work and amuse themselves under the superintendence of an old woman, who trims the torch and endeavors to keep order. The little girls spin flax in a primitive way without the aid of a "jenny," and the boys, who are, on the whole, much less industrious, make *lapti*—rude shoes of plaited bark—or simple bits of wicker-work. These occupations do not prevent an almost incessant hum of talk, frequent discordant attempts to sing in chorus, and occasional quarrels requiring the energetic interference of the old woman who sits by the torch. To amuse her noisy flock she sometimes relates to them, for the hundredth time, one of those wonderful old stories that lose nothing by repetition, and all listen to her atten-

tively, as if they had never heard the story before. The second Besyeda is held in another house by the young people of a riper age. Here the workers are naturally more staid, less given to quarreling, sing more in harmony, and require no one to look after them. Some people, however, might think that a chaperon or inspector of some kind would be by no means out of place, for a good deal of flirtation goes on, and, if village scandal is to be trusted, strict propriety in thought, word, and deed is not always observed. How far these reports are true I cannot pretend to say, for the presence of a stranger always acts on the company like the presence of a severe inspector. In the third Besyeda there is always at least strict decorum. Here the married women work together and talk about their domestic concerns, enlivening the conversation occasionally by the introduction of little bits of village scandal.

Such is the ordinary life of the peasants who live by agriculture; but many of the villagers live occasionally or permanently in the towns. Probably the majority of the peasants in this part of Russia have at some period of their lives gained a living in some other part of the country. Many of the absentees spend regularly a part of the year at home, whilst others visit their families only occasionally, and, it may be, at long intervals. In no case, however, do they sever their connection with their native village. The artisan who goes to work in a distant town never takes his wife and family with him, and even the man who becomes a rich merchant in Moscow or St. Petersburg remains probably a member of the Village Commune, and pays his share of the taxes, though he does not enjoy any of the corresponding privileges. Once I remember asking a rich man of this kind, the proprietor of several large valuable houses in St. Petersburg, why he did not free himself from all connection with his native Commune, with which he had no longer any common interests. His answer was, "It is all very well to be free, and I don't want anything from the Commune now; but my old father lives there, my mother is buried there, and I like to go back to the old place sometimes. Besides, I have children, and our affairs are commercial (*nashe dyelo trgovoe*). Who knows but my children may be very glad some day to have a share of the Communal land?"

In respect to these non-agricultural occupations, each district

has its specialty. The province of Yaroslaff, for instance, supplies the large towns with waiters for the Traktirs, or lower class of restaurants, whilst the best hotels in Petersburg are supplied by the Tartars of Kasímof, celebrated for their sobriety and honesty. One part of the province of Kostromá has a special reputation for producing carpenters and stove-builders, whilst another part, as I once discovered to my surprise, sends yearly to Siberia—not as convicts, but as free laborers—a large contingent of tailors and workers in felt! On questioning some youngsters who were accompanying as apprentices one of these bands, I was informed by a bright-eyed youth of about sixteen that he had already made the journey twice, and intended to go every winter. “And you always bring home a big pile of money with you?” I inquired. “Nitchivo!” replied the little fellow, gayly, with an air of pride and self-confidence; “last year I brought home three roubles!” This answer was, at the moment, not at all welcome, for I had just been discussing with a Russian fellow-traveler as to whether the peasantry can fairly be called industrious, and the boy’s reply enabled my antagonist to make a point against me. “You hear that!” he said, triumphantly. “A Russian peasant goes all the way to Siberia and back for three roubles! Could you get an Englishman to work at that rate?” “Perhaps not,” I replied, evasively, thinking at the same time that if a youth were sent several times from Land’s End to John o’ Groat’s House, and obliged to make the greater part of the journey in carts or on foot, he would probably expect, by way of remuneration for the time and labor expended, rather more than seven and sixpence!

Very often the peasants find industrial occupations without leaving home, for various industries which do not require complicated machinery are practiced in the villages by the peasants and their families. Textile fabrics, wooden vessels, wrought iron, pottery, leather, rush-matting, and numerous other articles are thus produced in enormous quantities. Occasionally we find not only a whole village, but even a whole district occupied almost exclusively with some one kind of manual industry. In the province of Vladimir, for example, a large group of villages live by Icon-painting; in one locality near Nizhni, nineteen villages are occupied with the manufacture of axes; round about Pavlovo, in the same province, eighty villages produce almost nothing but

cutlery ; and in a locality called Ouloma, on the borders of Noygorod and Tver, no less than two hundred villages live by nail-making.

These domestic industries have long existed, and have hitherto been an abundant source of revenue—providing a certain compensation for the poverty of the soil. But at present they are in a very critical position. They belong to the primitive period of economic development, and that period in Russia is now rapidly drawing to a close. Formerly the Head of a Household bought the raw material, and sold with a reasonable profit the manufactured articles at the “Bazaars,” as the local fairs are called, or perhaps at the great annual *Yarmarka** of Nizhni-Noygorod. This primitive system is now rapidly becoming obsolete. Great factories on the West-European model are quickly multiplying, and it is difficult for manual labor, unassisted by machinery, to compete with them. Besides this, the periodical Bazaars and *Yarmarki*, at which producers and consumers transacted their affairs without mediation, are being gradually replaced by permanent stores and various classes of middle-men, who facilitate the relations between consumers and producers. In a word, capital and wholesale enterprise have come into the field, and are revolutionizing the old methods of production and trade. Many of those who formerly worked at home on their own account are now forced to enter the great factories and work for fixed weekly or monthly wages ; and nearly all who still work at home now receive the raw material on credit, and deliver the manufactured articles to wholesale merchants at a stipulated price.

To the orthodox political economist this important change must afford great satisfaction. According to his theories it is a gigantic step in the right direction, and must necessarily redound to the advantage of all parties concerned. The producer now receives a regular supply of the raw material, and regularly disposes of the articles manufactured ; and the time and trouble which he formerly devoted to wandering about in search of customers he can now employ more profitably in productive work. The creation of a class between the producers and the consumers is an important step towards that division and specialization of labor, without which great industrial and commercial enterprises

* This term is a corruption of the German word *Jahrmarkt*.

are impossible. The consumer no longer requires to go on a fixed day to some distant point, on the chance of finding there what he requires, but can always buy what he pleases in the permanent stores. Above all, the production is greatly increased in amount, and the price of manufactured goods is proportionally lessened.

All this seems clear enough in theory, and any one who values intellectual tranquillity will feel disposed to accept this view of the case without questioning its accuracy; but the unfortunate traveler, who is obliged to use his eyes as well as his logical faculties, will probably find some little difficulty in making the objective facts fit into the *à priori* formula. Far be it from me to question the wisdom of political economists, but I cannot refrain from remarking that of the three classes concerned—producers, middle-men, and consumers—two fail to perceive and appreciate the benefits which have been conferred upon them. The producers complain that on the new system they work more and gain less; and the consumers complain that the manufactured articles are far inferior in quality. The middle-men, who are popularly supposed to take for themselves the lion's share of the profits, alone seem satisfied with the new arrangement. However this may be, one thing is certain: the great factories have not hitherto contributed to the material or moral welfare of the population among which they have been established. Nowhere is there so much disease, drunkenness, demoralization, and misery, as in the manufacturing districts.

The reader must not imagine that in making these statements I have any wish to calumniate the spirit of modern enterprise, or to advocate a return to primitive barbarism. All great changes produce a mixture of good and evil, and at first the evil is pretty sure to come prominently forward. Russia is at this moment in a state of transition, and the new condition of things is not yet properly organized. In general there is no proper accommodation for the workmen in the neighborhood of the factories, and in the smaller works no attention is paid to sanitary considerations. Thus, for instance, in the province of Novgorod there was in 1870 a lucifer-match manufactory, in which all the hands employed worked habitually in an atmosphere impregnated with the fumes of phosphorus; and the natural consequence of this was that a large number of the workers were suffering from disease of the jaw-bone and other complaints. Similar imperfec-

tions are seen in the commercial world. As very many branches of industry and commerce are still in their infancy, it often happens that some enterprising trader acquires practically a monopoly, and uses his influence in reckless fashion. Not a few industrial villages have thus fallen under the power of the *Kulaki*—literally Fists—as these monopolists are called. By advancing money the *Kulák* may succeed in acquiring over a group of villages a power almost as unlimited as that of the proprietor in the time of serfage.

Attempts are frequently made to break the power of the *Kulaki* by means of association. The favorite form of association is that recommended by Schulze-Delitsch, which has had so much success in Germany. What the ultimate result of this movement will be it would be hazardous to predict, but I may say that already some of these associations work remarkably well.

During all my travels in Russia, one of the objects which I constantly kept in view was the collection of materials for a History of the Emancipation of the Serfs—a great reform, which has always seemed to me one of the most interesting events of modern history. It was natural, therefore, that I should gather in this northern region as much information as possible regarding the life of the peasantry and their relation to the landed proprietors during the time of serfage; and I think that a little of this information will be not unacceptable to the reader.

In this, as in other parts of Russia, a very large portion of the land—perhaps as much as one-half—belonged to the State. The peasants living on this land had no masters, and were governed by a special branch of the Imperial Administration. In a certain sense they were serfs, for they were not allowed to change their official domicile, but practically they enjoyed a very large amount of liberty. By paying a small sum for a passport they could leave their villages for an indefinite length of time, and so long as they paid regularly their taxes and dues they were in little danger of being molested. Many of them, though officially inscribed in their native villages, lived permanently in the towns, and not a few of them succeeded in amassing large fortunes.

Of the remaining land, a considerable portion belonged to rich nobles, who rarely or never visited their estates, and left the management of them either to the serfs themselves or to a steward, who acted according to a code of instructions. On these estates

the position of the serfs was very similar to that of the State peasants. They had their Communal land, which they distributed among themselves as they thought fit, and enjoyed the remainder of the arable land in return for a fixed yearly rent.

Some proprietors, however, lived on their estates and farmed on their own account, and here the condition of the serfs was somewhat different. A considerable number of these, perhaps as many as ten per cent., were, properly speaking, not serfs at all, but rather domestic slaves, who fulfilled the functions of coachmen, grooms, gardeners, gamekeepers, cooks, lackeys, and the like. Their wives and daughters acted as nurses, domestic servants, ladies maids, and seamstresses. If the master organized a private theater or orchestra, the actors or musicians were drawn from this class. These serfs lived in the mansion or the immediate vicinity, possessed no land, except perhaps a little plot for a kitchen-garden, and were fed and clothed by the master. Their number was generally out of all proportion to the amount of work they had to perform, and consequently they were always imbued with an hereditary spirit of indolence, and performed lazily and carelessly what they had to do. On the other hand, they were often sincerely attached to the family they served, and occasionally proved by acts their fidelity and attachment. Here is an instance out of the many for which I can vouch. An old nurse, whose mistress was dangerously ill, vowed that, in the event of the patient's recovery, she would make a pilgrimage first to Kief, the Holy City on the Dnieper, and afterwards to Solovetsk, a much-revered monastery on an island in the White Sea. The patient recovered, and the old woman walked in fulfillment of her vow more than two thousand miles!

I have called this class of serfs "domestic slaves," because I cannot find any more appropriate term, but I must warn the reader that he ought not to use this phrase in presence of a Russian. On this point Russians are extremely sensitive. Serfage, they say indignantly, was something quite different from slavery; and slavery never existed in Russia!

This assertion, which I have heard scores of times from educated Russians, cannot be accepted unreservedly. The first part of it is perfectly true; the second, perfectly false. In old times slavery was a recognized institution in Russia, as in other countries. It is almost impossible to read a few pages of the old native chron-

icles without stumbling on references to slaves ; and I distinctly remember—though I cannot at this moment give chapter and verse—that there was one Russian Prince who was so valiant and so successful in his wars, that during his reign a slave might be bought for a few coppers. How the distinction between serfs and slaves gradually disappeared, and how the latter term fell into disuse, I need not here relate ; but I must assert, in the interests of truth, that the class of serfs above mentioned, though they were officially and popularly called *dvorovuiye lyudi*—that is to say, court-yard people—were to all intents and purposes domestic slaves. Down to the commencement of the present century the Russian newspapers contained advertisements of this kind—I take the examples almost at random from the *Moscow Gazette* of 1801 : “To BE SOLD, three coachmen, well-trained and handsome ; and two girls, the one eighteen and the other fifteen years of age, both of them good-looking and well acquainted with various kinds of handiwork. In the same house there are for sale two hair-dressers : the one twenty-one years of age can read, write, play on a musical instrument, and act as huntsman ; the other can dress ladies’ and gentlemen’s hair. In the same house are sold pianos and organs.” A little further on, a first-rate clerk, a carver, and a lackey are offered for sale, and the reason assigned is superabundance of the articles in question (*za izlishestvo*). In some instances it seems as if the serfs and the cattle were intentionally put in the same category, as in the following : “In this house one can buy a coachman, and a Dutch cow about to calve.” The style of these advertisements and the frequent recurrence of the same address show plainly that there was at that time a regular class of slave-dealers.

The humane Alexander I. prohibited public advertisements of this kind, but he did not put down the custom which they represented ; and his successor, Nicholas, took no active measures for its repression. Thus until the commencement of the present reign—that is to say, until about twenty years ago—the practice was continued under a more or less disguised form. Middle-aged people have often told me that in their youth they knew proprietors who habitually caused young domestic serfs to be taught trades, in order afterwards to sell them or let them out for hire. It was from such proprietors that the theaters obtained a large number of their best actors.

Very different was the position of the serfs properly so-called.

They lived in villages, possessed houses and gardens of their own, tilled the Communal land for their own benefit, enjoyed a certain amount of self-government, of which I shall speak presently, and were rarely sold except as part of the estate. They might, indeed, be sold to a landed proprietor, and transferred to his estates ; but such transactions rarely took place. The ordinary relations which existed between serfs and the proprietor may be best explained by one or two examples. Let us take first Ivánofka.

Though the proprietor's house was situated, as I have said, close to the village, the manor land and the Communal land had always been kept clearly separate, and might almost be said to form two independent estates. The proprietor who reigned in Ivánofka during the last years of serfage was keenly alive to his own interests, and always desirous of increasing his revenue ; but he was, at the same time, a just and intelligent man, who was never guilty of extortion or cruelty. Though he had the welfare of his serfs really at heart, he rarely interfered in their domestic or Communal arrangements, because he believed that men in general, and Russian peasants in particular, are the best administrators of their own affairs. He did not, indeed, always carry out this principle to its logical consequences, for he was not by any means a thorough doctrinaire. Thus, for example, he insisted on being consulted when a Village Elder was to be elected, or any important matter decided ; and when circumstances seemed to demand his interference, he usually showed the peasants that he could be dictator if he chose. These were, however, exceptional incidents. In the ordinary course of affairs he treated the Commune almost as a respected farmer or trusted steward. In return for the land which he ceded to it, and which it was free to distribute among its members as it thought fit, he demanded a certain amount of labor and dues ; but he never determined what particular laborers should be sent to him, or in what way the dues should be levied.

The amount of the labor-dues was determined in this way. The *tyagló*, or labor-unit, was composed of a man, a woman, and a horse ; and each *tyagló* owed to the proprietor three days' labor every week. If a household contained two *tyágla*, one of them might work for the proprietor six days in the week, and thereby liberate the other from its obligation. In this way one-half of a large family could labor constantly for the household, whilst the other half fulfilled all the obligations towards the proprietor. The

other dues consisted of lambs, chickens, eggs, and linen-cloth, together with a certain sum of money, which was contributed by those peasants who were allowed to go away and work in the towns.

At a short distance from Ivánofka was an estate, which had been managed in the time of serfage on entirely different principles. The proprietor was a man who had likewise the welfare of his serfs at heart, because he knew that on their welfare depended his own revenues, but he did not believe in the principle of allowing them to manage their own affairs. The Russian peasant, he was wont to say, is a child—a foolish, imprudent, indolent child, who inevitably ruins himself when not properly looked after. In accordance with this principle the proprietor sought to regulate not merely the Communal, but also the domestic concerns of his serfs. Not only did he always nominate the Village Elder and decide all matters touching the Communal welfare, but he at the same time arranged the marriages, decided who was to seek work in the towns and who was to stay at home, paid frequent visits of inspection to the peasants' houses, prohibited the heads of families from selling their grain without his permission, and exercised in various other ways a system of minute supervision. In return for all this paternal solicitude he was able to extract a wonderfully large revenue from his estate, though his fields were by no means more fertile or better cultivated than those of his neighbors. The additional revenue was derived not from the land, but from the serfs. Knowing intimately the domestic affairs of each family, he could lay on them the heaviest possible burdens without adding that last hair which is said to break the camel's back. And many of the expedients he employed did more credit to his ingenuity than to his moral character. Thus, for instance, if he discovered that a family had saved a little money, he would propose that one of the daughters should marry some one of whom, he knew, her father would certainly disapprove, or he would express his intention of giving one of the sons as a recruit. In either case a ransom was pretty sure to be paid in order to ward off the threatened danger.

All the proprietors who lived on their estates approached more or less nearly to one of these two types; but here in the northern regions the latter type was not very often met with. Partly from the prevailing absenteeism among the landlords, and partly from the peasants' old-established habit of wandering about the country

and going to the towns in search of work, these peasants of the north are more energetic, more intelligent, more independent, and consequently less docile and pliable than those of the fertile central provinces. They have, too, more education. A large proportion of them can read and write, and occasionally one meets among them men who have a keen desire for knowledge. Several times I encountered peasants in this region who had a small collection of books, and twice I found in such collections, much to my astonishment, a Russian translation of Buckle's "*History of Civilization*!"

How, it may be asked, did a work of this sort find its way to such place? If the reader will pardon a short digression, I shall explain the fact.

At the commencement of the present reign there was a curious intellectual movement—of which I shall have more to say hereafter—among the Russian educated classes. The movement assumed various forms, of which two of the most prominent were a desire for encyclopædic knowledge, and an attempt to reduce all knowledge to a scientific form. For men in this state of mind, Buckle's great work had naturally a powerful fascination. It seemed at first sight to reduce the multifarious, conflicting facts of human history to a few simple principles, and to evolve order out of chaos. Its success, therefore, was great. In the course of a few years no less than four independent translations—so at least I have been informed by a good authority—were published and sold. Every one read, or at least professed to have read, the wonderful book, and many believed that its author was the great genius of the present generation. During the first year of my residence in Russia, I rarely had a serious conversation without hearing Buckle's name mentioned; and my friends almost always assumed that he had succeeded in creating a genuine science of history on the inductive method. In vain I pointed out that Buckle had merely thrown out some hints in his introductory chapter as to how such a science ought to be constructed, and that he had himself made no serious attempt to use the method which he commended. My objections had little or no effect: the belief was too deep-rooted to be so easily eradicated. In books, periodicals, newspapers, and professional lectures, the name of Buckle was constantly cited—often violently dragged in without the slightest reason—and the cheap translations of his work were sold in enormous quantities. It is not, then, so very wonderful after all that

the book should have found its way to two villages in the province of Yaroslaff.

The enterprising, self-reliant, independent spirit which is often to be found among those peasants of the north, appears occasionally in the young generation. Often in this part of the country I have encountered boys who recalled young America rather than young Russia. One of these young hopefuls I remembered well. I was waiting at a post-station for the horses to be changed, when he appeared before me in a sheep-skin, fur cap, and gigantic double-soled boots—all of which articles had been made on a scale adapted to future rather than actual requirements. He must have stood in his boots about three feet eight inches, and he could not have been more than twelve years of age; but he had already learned to look upon life as a serious business, wore a commanding air, and knitted his innocent little brows as if the cares of an empire weighed on his diminutive shoulders. Though he was to act as Yemstehik, he had to leave the putting in of the horses to larger specimens of the human species, but he observed carefully that all was done properly. Putting one of his big boots a little in advance, and drawing himself up to his full shortness, he watched the operation attentively, as if the smallness of his stature had nothing to do with his inactivity. When all was ready, he climbed up to his seat, and at a signal from the station-keeper, who watched with paternal pride all the movements of the little prodigy, we dashed off at a pace rarely attained by post-horses. He had the faculty of emitting a peculiar sound—something between a whirr and a whistle—that appeared to have a magical effect on the team, and every few minutes he employed this incentive. The road was rough, and at every jolt he was shot upwards into the air, but he always fell into his proper position, and never lost for a moment his self-possession or his balance. At the end of the journey I found we had made about fourteen miles within the hour.

Unfortunately, this energetic, enterprising spirit sometimes takes an illegitimate direction. Not only whole villages, but even whole districts have in this way acquired a bad reputation for robbery, the manufacture of paper-money, and similar offenses against the criminal law. In popular parlance, these localities are said to contain “people who play pranks” (*narod shalit*). I must, however, remark that, if I may judge by my own experience,

these so-called "playful" tendencies are greatly exaggerated. Though I have traveled hundreds of miles at night on lonely roads, I have never been robbed or in any way molested. Once, indeed, when traveling at night in a tarantass, I discovered on awaking that my driver was bending over me, and had introduced his hand into one of my pockets ; but the incident ended without serious consequences. When I caught the delinquent hand, and demanded an explanation from the owner, he replied, in an apologetic, caressing tone, that the night was cold, and he wished to warm his fingers ; and when I advised him to use for that purpose his own pockets rather than mine, he promised to act in future according to my advice. More than once, it is true, I believed that I was in danger of being attacked, but on every occasion my fears turned out to be unfounded, and sometimes the catastrophe was ludicrous rather than tragical. Let the following serve as an illustration.

I had occasion to traverse, in company with a Russian friend, the country lying to the east of the river Vetluga—a land of forest and morass, with here and there a patch of cultivation. The majority of the population are Tcheremiss, a Finnish tribe ; but near the banks of the river there are villages of Russian peasants, and these latter have the reputation of "playing pranks." When we were on the point of starting from Kozmodemiansk, a town on the right bank of the Volga, we received a visit from an officer of rural police, who painted in very somber colors the habits and moral character—or, more properly, immoral character—of the people whose acquaintance we were about to make. He related with excited, melodramatic gesticulation his deadly encounters and hair-breadth escapes in the villages through which we had to pass, and ended the interview with a strong recommendation to us not to travel at night, and to keep at all times our eyes open and our revolver ready. The effect of his narrative, like the effect of so many stories that appear in print, was considerably diminished by the prominence of the moral, which was to the effect that there never had been a police-officer, either in Russia or any other country, who had shown so much zeal, energy, and courage in the discharge of his duty as the worthy man before us. We considered it, however, advisable to remember his hint about keeping our eyes open.

In spite of our intention of being very cautious, it was already

dark when we arrived at the village which was to be our halting-place for the night, and it seemed at first as if we should be obliged to spend the night in the open air. The inhabitants had already retired to rest, and refused to open their doors to unknown travelers. At length one woman, more hospitable than her neighbors, consented to let us pass the night in an outer apartment (*seni*), and this permission we gladly accepted. My friend, who had not forgotten the graphic descriptions of the police-officer at Kezmodemiansk, made a careful inspection of the place, and declared that the room, though densely populated, contained no bipeds but ourselves. Still, in view of a curious opening in the roof, he thought that we ought to mount guard alternately during the night and proposed to take the first watch. This was at once agreed to. When we had carefully fastened the windows by ingenious, extemporized contrivances, I gave him my revolver, for self-defense or for raising an alarm, as circumstances might dictate, and lay down to rest. Our precautions had not been unnecessary. First there was an attempt to open the outer door; then an attempt to open the door from the inner apartment; and, lastly, an attempt to open the window. All these attempts were duly frustrated, and at length I fell asleep; but shortly afterwards I was suddenly aroused by some one tightly grasping my arm. As the light had been in the meantime extinguished, I could see nothing, but I instinctively sprang up, and endeavored to close with my invisible assailant. In vain! He dexterously eluded my grasp, and I stumbled over my port-manteau, which was lying on the floor; but my prompt action revealed who the intruder was, by producing a wild flutter and a frantic cackling! Before my companion could strike a light, the mysterious attack was fully explained. The supposed midnight robber and possible assassin was simply a peaceable hen that had gone to roost on my arm, and, on finding her position unsteady, had dug her claws into what she mistook for a roosting-pole!

Though I have not yet visited the extreme north of Russia, perhaps I ought to insert here some information, which I collected from various sources, concerning the life of the peasantry in that region.

If we draw a wavy line eastward from a point a little to the north of St. Petersburg, as is shown in the map, we shall have between that line and the Polar Ocean what may be regarded as a

distinct, peculiar region, differing in many respects from the rest of Russia. Throughout the whole of it the climate is very severe. For about half of the year the ground is covered by deep snow, and the rivers covered with ice. By far the greater part of the surface is occupied by forests of pine, fir, larch, and birch, or by vast, unfathomable morasses. The arable land and pasturage taken together form only about one and a half per cent. of the area. The population is scarce—little more than one to the English square mile—and settled chiefly along the banks of the rivers. The peasantry support themselves by fishing, hunting, felling and floating timber, preparing tar and charcoal, cattle-breeding, and, in the extreme north, by breeding reindeer.

These are their chief occupations, but they do not entirely neglect agriculture. Their summer is short, but they make the most of it by means of a peculiar and ingenious mode of farming, which, though it may seem strange, not to say absurd, to the English farmer, is well adapted to the peculiar local conditions. The peasant knows of course nothing about agronomical chemistry, but he, as well as his forefathers, have observed that if wood be burnt on a field, and the ashes be mixed with the soil, the probable result is a good harvest. On this simple principle his system of farming is based. When spring comes round and the leaves begin to appear on the trees, a band of peasants, armed with their hatchets, proceed to some spot in the woods previously fixed upon. Here they begin to make a clearing. This is no easy matter, for tree-felling is hard and tedious work; but the process does not take so much time as might be expected, for the workmen have been brought up to the trade, and wield their axes with marvelous dexterity. Besides this, they contrive, it is said, to use fire as an assistant. When they have felled all the trees, great and small, they return to their homes, and think no more about their clearing till the autumn, when they return, in order to strip the fallen trees of their branches, to pick out what they require for building purposes or firewood, and to pile up the remainder in heaps. The logs for building or firewood are dragged away by horses as soon as the first fall of snow has made a good slippery road, but the piles are allowed to remain till the following spring, when they are stirred up with long poles and ignited. The flames first appear at several points, and then, with the help of the dry grass and chips, rapidly spread in all directions till they join together,

and form a gigantic bonfire, such as is never seen in more densely-populated countries. If the fire does its work properly, the whole of the space is covered with a layer of ashes ; and when these have been slightly mixed with soil by means of a light plow, the seed is sown.

On the field prepared in this original fashion is sown barley, rye, or flax ; and the harvests, nearly always good, sometimes border on the miraculous. Barley or rye may be expected to produce about sixfold in ordinary years, and they may produce as much as thirtyfold under peculiarly favorable circumstances. The fertility is, however, short-lived. If the soil is poor and stony, not more than two crops can be raised ; but if it is of a better quality, it may give tolerable harvests for six or seven successive years. In most countries this would be an absurdly expensive way of manuring, for wood is much too valuable a commodity to be used for such a purpose ; but in this northern region the forests are boundless, and in the districts where there is no river or stream by which timber may be floated, the trees not used in this way rot from old age. Under these circumstances the system is reasonable, but it must be admitted that it does not give a very large return for the amount of labor expended, and in bad seasons it gives almost no return at all.

The other sources of revenue are scarcely less precarious. With his gun and a little parcel of provisions, the peasant wanders about in the trackless forests, and too often returns after many days with a very light bag ; or he starts in autumn for some distant lake, and comes back after five or six weeks with nothing better than perch and pike. Sometimes he tries his luck at deep-sea fishing. In this case he starts in February—probably on foot—for Kem, situated on the shore of the White Sea, or perhaps for the more distant Kola, situated on a small river which falls into the Arctic Ocean. There, in company with three or four others, he starts on a fishing cruise along the Murman coast, or, it may be, off the coast of Spitzbergen. His gains will depend on the amount caught, for it is a joint-venture ; but in no case can they be very great, for three-fourths of the fish brought into port belong to the owner of the craft and tackle. Of the sum realized, he brings home perhaps only a small part, for he has a strong temptation to buy rum, tea, and other luxuries, which are very dear in those northern latitudes. If the fishing is good and

he resists temptation, he may save as much as 100 roubles—about £12—and thereby live comfortably all winter ; but if the fishing season is bad, he may find himself at the end of it not only with empty pockets, but in debt to the owner of the boat. This debt he may pay off, if he has a horse, by transporting the dried fish to Kargopol, St. Petersburg, or some other market.

Perhaps the best way to convey an idea of peasant life in this region is to give a family budget which I happen to have at hand. The family consisted of five members : two able-bodied males, one boy, and two women. The year was, on the whole, a good one ; for though the fishing was not as successful as it might have been, the harvest was much more plentiful than usual, and supplied the family with food for five months. The following table shows the revenue and expenditure in English money :—

REVENUE.

	£	s.	d.
Sold 100 pairs of Gelinottes and other Game, at			
6d. per pair	2	10	0
“ 200 lbs. of Caviar, at 3d. per lb.	2	10	0
“ Dried Fish	1	5	0
“ Herrings and other Sea Fish	3	5	0
Miscellanea (perhaps from felling timber) ..	2	15	0
	£12	5	0

EXPENDITURE.

	£	s.	d.
Rye Meal (2,240 lbs.), to supply the deficit of			
the harvest	7	0	0
Taxes	2	5	0
Clothes and Boots	2	10	0
Fishing Tackle, Powder and Shot, &c.	0	10	0
	£12	5	0

The above budget must not be regarded as anything more than a possibility, but it may perhaps assist the reader who desires to gain at least a vague notion of peasant life throughout a large part of Northern Russia.

It is here in the far North that the ancient folk-lore—popular songs, stories, and fragments of epic poetry—has been best pre-

served ; but this is a field on which I need not enter, for the reader can easily find all that he may desire to know on the subject in the brilliant writings of M. Rambaud and the very interesting, conscientious works of Mr. Ralston,* which enjoy a high reputation in Russia.

* Rambaud, "*La Russie Epiquée*," Paris, 1876; Ralston, "*The Songs of the Russian People*," London, 1872; and "*Russian Folk-Tales*," London, 1873.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MIR, OR VILLAGE COMMUNITY.

Social and Political Importance of the Mir—The Mir and the Family compared—Theory of the Communal System—Practical Deviations from the Theory—The Mir is a Good Specimen of Constitutional Government of the Extreme Democratic Type—The Village Assembly—Female Members—The Elections—Distribution of the Communal Land.

WHEN I had gained a clear notion of the peasant family, and had collected some information regarding the habits and occupations of the peasantry, I turned my attention to the constitution of the village. This was a subject which specially interested me, because I was aware that the Mir is the most peculiar of Russian institutions. Many years before visiting Russia I had read Haxthausen's celebrated work, by which the peculiarities of the Russian village system were first made known to Western Europe, and during my stay in St. Petersburg I had often been informed by intelligent, educated Russians that the rural commune presented a practical solution of many difficult social problems, with which the philosophers and statesmen of the West had long been vainly struggling. "The nations of the West"—such was the substance of innumerable discourses which I had heard—"are at present on the high-road to political and social anarchy, and England has the unenviable distinction of being foremost in the race. The natural increase of population, together with the expropriation of the small landholders by the great landed proprietors, has created a dangerous and ever-increasing Proletariate—a great disorganized mass of human beings, without homes, without permanent domicile, without property of any kind, without any stake in the existing institutions. Part of these gain a miserable pittance as agricultural laborers, and live in a condition infinitely worse than serfage. The others have been for ever uprooted from the soil, and have collected in the large towns, where they earn an

uncertain living in industrial occupations, or swell the ranks of the criminal classes. In England you have no longer a peasantry in the proper sense of the term, and unless some radical measures be very soon adopted, you will never be able to create such a class, for men who have been long exposed to the unwholesome influences of town life are physically and morally incapable of becoming agriculturists. Hitherto England has enjoyed, in consequence of her geographical position, her political freedom, and her vast natural deposits of coal and iron, a wholly exceptional position in the industrial world. Fearing no competition, she has proclaimed the principles of Free Trade, and has inundated the world with her manufactures—using unscrupulously her powerful navy and all the other forces at her command for breaking down every barrier tending to check the flood sent forth from Manchester and Birmingham. In that way her hungry Proletariate has been fed. But the industrial supremacy of England is drawing to a close. The nations have discovered the perfidious fallacy of Free-Trade principles, and are now learning to manufacture for their own wants, instead of paying England enormous sums to manufacture for them. Very soon English goods will no longer find foreign markets, and how will the hungry Proletariate then be fed? Already the grain production of England is far from sufficient for the wants of the population, so that even when the harvest is exceptionally abundant, enormous quantities of wheat are imported from all quarters of the globe. Hitherto this grain has been paid for by the manufactured goods annually exported, but how will it be procured when these goods are no longer wanted by foreign consumers? And what then will the hungry Proletariate do?"

This somber picture of England's future had often been presented to me, and on nearly every occasion I had been assured that Russia had been saved from these terrible evils by the rural Commune—an institution which, in spite of its simplicity and incalculable utility, West-Europeans seemed utterly incapable of understanding and appreciating.

The reader will now easily conceive with what interest I took to studying this wonderful institution, and with what energy I prosecuted my researches. An institution which professes to solve satisfactorily the most difficult social problems of the future, is not to be met with every day, even in Russia, which is specially rich in materials of study for the student of social science.

On my arrival at Ivánofka, my knowledge of the institution was of that vague, superficial kind which is commonly derived from men who are fonder of sweeping generalizations and rhetorical declamation than of serious, patient study of phenomena. I knew that the chief personage in a Russian village is the *Selski starosta*, or Village Elder, and that all important communal affairs are regulated by the *Selski Skhod*, or Village Assembly. Further, I was aware that the land in the vicinity of the village belongs to the Commune, and is distributed periodically among the members in such a way that every able-bodied peasant possesses a share sufficient, or nearly sufficient, for his maintenance. Beyond this elementary information I knew little or nothing.

My first attempt at extending my knowledge was not very successful. Hoping that my friend Ivan might be able to assist me, and knowing that the popular name for the Commune is *Mir*, which means also "the world," I put to him the direct, simple question, "What is the *Mir*?"

Ivan was not easily disconcerted, but for once he looked puzzled, and stared at me vacantly. When I endeavored to explain to him my question, he simply knitted his brows and scratched the back of his head. This latter movement is the Russian peasant's method of accelerating cerebral action; but in the present instance it had no practical result. In spite of his efforts, Ivan could not get much further than the "*Kak vam skazat*?" that is to say, "How am I to tell you?"

It was not difficult to perceive that I had adopted an utterly false method of investigation, and a moment's reflection sufficed to show me the absurdity of my question. I had asked from an uneducated man a philosophical definition, instead of extracting from him material in the form of concrete facts, and constructing therefrom a definition for myself. These concrete facts Ivan was both able and willing to supply; and as soon as I adopted a rational mode of questioning, I received an abundant supply of most interesting information. This information, together with the results of much subsequent conversation and reading, I now propose to present to the reader in my own words.

The peasant family of the old type is, as we have just seen, a kind of primitive association, in which the members have nearly all things in common. The village may be roughly described as a primitive association on a larger scale.

Between these two social units there are many points of analogy. In both there are common interests and common responsibilities. In both there is a principal personage, who is in a certain sense ruler within, and representative as regards the outside world : in the one case called Khozaïn, or Head of the Household, and in the other Starosta, or Village Elder. In both the authority of the ruler is limited ; in the one case by the adult members of the family, and in the other by the heads of households. In both there is a certain amount of common property : in the one case the house and nearly all that it contains, and in the other the arable land and pasturage. In both cases there is a certain amount of common responsibility : in the one case for all the debts, and in the other for all the taxes and Communal obligations. And both are protected to a certain extent against the ordinary legal consequences of insolvency, for the family cannot be deprived of its house or necessary agricultural implements, and the Commune cannot be deprived of its land, by importunate creditors.

On the other hand, there are many important points of contrast. The Commune is, of course, much larger than the family, and the mutual relations of its members are by no means so closely interwoven. The members of a family all farm together, and those of them who earn money from other sources are expected to put their savings into the common purse ; whilst the households composing a Commune farm independently, and pay into the common treasury only a certain fixed sum.

From these brief remarks the reader will at once perceive that a Russian village is something very different from a village in our sense of the term, and that the villagers are bound together by ties quite unknown to the English rural population. A family living in an English village has little reason to take an interest in the affairs of its neighbors. The isolation of the individual families may not be quite perfect, for man, being a social animal, takes, and ought to take, a certain interest in the affairs of those around him, and this social duty is sometimes fulfilled by the weaker sex with more zeal than is absolutely indispensable for the public welfare ; but families may live for many years in the same village without ever becoming conscious of common interests. So long as the Jones family do not commit any culpable breach of public order, such as putting obstructions on the highway or habitually setting their house on fire, their neighbor Brown takes probably

no interest in their affairs, and has no ground for interfering with their perfect liberty of action. Jones may be a drunkard and hopelessly insolvent, and he may some night decamp clandestinely with his whole family and never more be heard of; but all these things do not affect the interests of Brown, unless he has been imprudent enough to entertain with the delinquent more than simple neighborly relations. Now, amongst the families composing a Russian village, such a state of isolation is impossible. The Heads of Households must often meet together and consult in the Village Assembly, and their daily occupations must be influenced by the Communal decrees. They cannot begin to mow the hay or plow the fallow field until the Village Assembly has passed a resolution on the subject. If a peasant becomes a drunkard, or takes some equally efficient means to become insolvent, every family in the village has a right to complain, not merely in the interests of public morality, but from selfish motives, because all the families are collectively responsible for his taxes. For the same reason no peasant can permanently leave the village without the consent of the Commune, and this consent will not be granted until the applicant gives satisfactory security for the fulfilment of all his actual and future liabilities. If a peasant wishes to go away for a short time, in order to work elsewhere, he must obtain a written permission, which serves him as a passport during his absence; and he may be recalled at any moment by a Communal decree. In reality he is rarely recalled so long as he sends home regularly the full amount of his taxes—including the dues which he has to pay for the temporary passport—but sometimes the Commune uses the power of recall for the purpose of extorting money from the absent member. If it becomes known, for instance, that an absent member receives a good salary in one of the towns, he may one day receive a formal order to return at once to his native village, and be informed at the same time, unofficially, that his presence will be dispensed with if he will send to the commune a certain amount of money. The money thus sent is generally used by the commune for convivial purposes. Whether this method of extortion is frequently used by the Communes, I cannot confidently say, but I suspect that it is by no means rare, for one or two cases have accidentally come under my own observation, and I know that the police of St. Petersburg have been recently ordered not to send back any peasants to their native villages

until some proof is given that the ground of recall is not a mere pretext.

In order to understand the Russian village system, the reader must bear in mind these two important facts: the arable land and the pasturage belong not to the individual houses, but to the Commune, and all the households are collectively and individually responsible for the entire sum which the Commune has to pay annually into the Imperial Treasury.

In all countries the theory of government and administration differs considerably from the actual practice. Nowhere is this difference greater than in Russia, and in no Russian institution is it greater than in the Village Commune. It is necessary, therefore, to know both theory and practice; and it is well to begin with the former, because it is the simpler of the two. When we have once thoroughly mastered the theory, it is easy to understand the deviations that are made to suit peculiar local conditions.

According, then, to theory, all male peasants in every part of the Empire are inscribed in census lists, which form the basis of the direct taxation. These lists are revised at irregular intervals, and all males alive at the time of the "revision," from the newborn babe to the centenarian, are duly inscribed. Each Commune has a list of this kind, and pays to the Government an annual sum proportionate to the number of names which the list contains, or, in popular language, according to the number of "revision souls." During the intervals between the revisions the financial authorities take no notice of the births and deaths. A Commune which has a hundred male members at the time of the revision may have in a few years considerably more or considerably less than that number, but it has to pay taxes for a hundred members all the same until a new revision is made for the whole Empire.

Now in Russia, so far at least as the rural population is concerned, the payment of taxes is inseparably connected with the possession of land. Every peasant who pays taxes is supposed to have a share of the arable land and pasturage belonging to the Commune. If the Communal revision lists contain a hundred names, the Communal land ought to be divided into a hundred shares, and each "revision soul" should enjoy his share in return for the taxes which he pays.

The reader who has followed my explanations up to this point may naturally conclude that the taxes paid by the peasants are in

reality a species of rent for the land which they enjoy. So it seems, and so it is sometimes represented, but so in reality it is not. When a man rents a bit of land he acts according to his own judgment, and makes a voluntary contract with the proprietor ; but the Russian peasant is obliged to pay his taxes whether he desires to enjoy land or not. The theory, therefore, that the taxes are simply the rent of the land, will not bear even superficial examination. Equally untenable is the theory that they are a species of land-tax. In any reasonable system of land-dues the yearly sum imposed bears some kind of proportion to the quantity and quality of the land enjoyed ; but in Russia it may be that the members of one Commune possess six acres, and the members of the neighboring Commune seven acres, and yet the taxes in both cases are the same. The truth is that the taxes are personal, and are calculated according to the number of male "souls," and the Government does not take the trouble to inquire how the Communal land is distributed. The Commune has to pay into the Imperial Treasury a fixed yearly sum, according to the number of its "revision souls," and distributes the land among its members as it thinks fit.

How, then, does the Commune distribute the land ? To this question it is impossible to give a definite general reply, because each Commune acts as it pleases. Some act strictly according to the theory. These divide their land at the time of the revision into a number of portions or shares corresponding to the number of revision souls, and give to each family a number of shares corresponding to the number of revision souls which it contains. This is from the administrative point of view by far the simplest system. The census list determines how much land each family will enjoy, and the existing tenures are disturbed only by the revisions which take place at irregular intervals. Since 1719 only ten revisions have been made, so that the average length of these intervals has been about fifteen years—a term which may be regarded as a tolerably long lease. But, on the other hand, this system has serious defects. The revision list represents merely the numerical strength of the families, and the numerical strength is often not at all in proportion to the working power. Let us suppose, for example, two families, each containing at the time of the revision five male members. According to the census list these two families are equal, and ought to receive equal shares of

the land ; but in reality it may happen that the one contains a father in the prime of life and four able-bodied sons, whilst the other contains a widow and five little boys. The wants and working power of these two families are of course very different ; and if the above system of distribution be applied, the man with four sons and a goodly supply of grandchildren will probably find that he has too little land, whilst the widow with her five little boys will find it difficult to cultivate the five shares allotted to her, and utterly impossible to pay the corresponding amount of taxation—for in all cases, it must be remembered, the Communal burdens are distributed in the same proportion as the land.

But why, it may be said, should the widow not accept provisionally the five shares, and let to others the part which she does not require ? The balance of rent after payment of the taxes might help her to bring up her young family.

So it seems to one acquainted only with the rural economy of England, where land is scarce, and always gives a revenue more than sufficient to defray the taxes. But in Russia the possession of a share of Communal land is often not a privilege, but a burden. In some Communes the land is so poor and abundant that it cannot be let at any price. Witness, for instance, many villages in the province of Smolensk, where the traveler may see numerous uncultivated strips in the communal fields. In others the soil will repay cultivation, but a fair rent will not suffice to pay the taxes and dues.

To obviate these inconvenient results of the simpler system, some communes have adopted the expedient of allotting the land, not according to the number of revision souls, but according to the working power of the families. Thus, in the instance above supposed, the widow would receive perhaps two shares, and the large household, containing five workers, would receive perhaps seven or eight. Since the breaking-up of the large families, such inequality as I have supposed is, of course, rare ; but inequality of a less extreme kind does still occur, and justifies a departure from the system of allotment according to the revision lists.

Even if the allotment be fair and equitable at the time of the revision, it may soon become unfair and burdensome by the natural fluctuations of the population. Births and deaths may in the course of a very few years entirely alter the relative working power of the various families. The sons of the widow may grow

up to manhood, whilst two or three able-bodied members of the other family may be cut off by an epidemic. Thus, long before a new revision takes place, the distribution of the land may be no longer in accordance with the wants and capacities of the various families composing the Commune. To correct this, various expedients are employed. Some Communes transfer particular lots from one family to another, as circumstances demand ; whilst others make from time to time, during the intervals between the revisions, a complete re-distribution and re-allotment of the land.

The system of allotment adopted depends entirely on the will of the particular Commune. In this respect the Communes enjoy the most complete autonomy, and no peasant ever dreams of appealing against a Communal decree. The higher authorities not only abstain from all interference in the allotment of the Communal lands, but remain in profound ignorance as to which system the Communes habitually adopt. Though the Imperial Administration has a most voracious appetite for symmetrically-constructed statistical tables—many of them formed chiefly out of materials supplied by the mysterious inner consciousness of the subordinate officials—no attempt has yet been made to collect statistical data which might throw light on this important subject. In spite of the systematic and persistent efforts of the centralized bureaucracy to regulate minutely all departments of the national life, the rural Communes, which contain about five-sixths of the population, remain in many respects entirely beyond its influence, and even beyond its sphere of vision ! But let not the reader be astonished overmuch. He will learn in time that Russia is the land of paradoxes ; and meanwhile he is about to receive a still more startling bit of information—a statement that should be heralded in by a flourish of trumpets. In “the great stronghold of Caesarian despotism and centralized bureaucracy,” these Village Communes, containing about five-sixths of the population, are capital specimens of representative Constitutional government of the extreme democratic type !

When I say that the rural Commune is a good specimen of Constitutional government, I use the phrase in the English, and not in the continental sense. In the continental languages a Constitutional government means a government which possesses a long, formal document, composed of many successive paragraphs, in which the functions of the various institutions, the

powers of the various authorities, and all the possible methods of procedure are carefully defined. Such a document was never heard of in Russian Village Communes. Their Constitution is of the English type—a body of unwritten, traditional conceptions, which have grown up and modified themselves under the influence of ever-changing practical necessity. If the functions and mutual relations of the Village Elder and the Village Assembly have ever been defined, neither the Elders nor the members of the Assembly know anything of such definitions; and yet every peasant knows, as if by instinct, what each of these authorities can do and cannot do. The Commune is, in fact, a living institution, whose spontaneous vitality enables it to dispense with the assistance and guidance of the written law.

As to its thoroughly democratic character there can be no possible doubt. The Elder represents merely the executive power. All the real authority resides in the Assembly, of which all Heads of Households are members.

The simple procedure, or rather the absence of all formal procedure, at the Assemblies, illustrates admirably the essentially practical character of the institution. The meetings are held in the open air, because in the village there is no building—except the church, which can be used only for religious purposes—large enough to contain all the members; and they almost always take place on Sundays or holidays, when the peasants have plenty of leisure. Any open space, where there is sufficient room and little mud, serves as a Forum. The discussions are occasionally very animated, but there is rarely any attempt at speech-making. If any young member should show an inclination to indulge in oratory, he is sure to be unceremoniously interrupted by some of the older members, who have never any sympathy with fine talking. The whole assemblage has the appearance of a crowd of people who have accidentally come together, and are discussing in little groups subjects of local interest. Gradually some one group, containing two or three peasants who have more moral influence than their fellows, attracts the others, and the discussion becomes general. Two or more peasants may speak at a time, and interrupt each other freely—using plain, unvarnished language, not at all parliamentary—and the discussion may become for a few moments a confused, unintelligible noise, “a din to fright a monster’s ear;” but at the moment when the spectator imagines

that the consultation is about to be transformed into a promiscuous fight, the tumult spontaneously subsides, or perhaps a general roar of laughter announces that some one has been successfully hit by a strong *argumentum ad hominem*, or biting personal remark. In any case there is no danger of the disputants coming to blows. No class of men in the world is more good-natured and pacific than the Russian peasantry. When sober they never fight, and even when under the influence of alcohol they are more likely to be violently affectionate than disagreeably quarrelsome. If two of them take to drinking together, the probability is that in a few minutes, though they may never have seen each other before, they will be expressing in very strong terms their mutual regard and affection, confirming their words with an occasional friendly embrace.

Theoretically speaking, the Village Parliament has a Speaker, in the person of the Village Elder. The word Speaker is etymologically less objectionable than the term President, for the personage in question never sits down, but mingles in the crowd like the ordinary members. Objection may be taken to the word on the ground that the Elder speaks much less than many other members, but this may likewise be said of the Speaker of the House of Commons. Whatever we may call him, the Elder is officially the principal personage in the crowd, and wears the insignia of office in the form of a small medal suspended from his neck by a thin brass chain. His duties, however, are extremely light. To call to order those who interrupt the discussion is no part of his functions. If he calls an honorable member *Durák* (blockhead), or interrupts an orator with a laconic "*Moltehi!*" (hold your tongue!), he does so in virtue of no special prerogative, but simply in accordance with a time-honored privilege, which is equally enjoyed by all present, and may be employed with impunity against himself. Indeed, it may be said in general that the phraseology and the procedure are not subjected to any strict rules. The Elder comes prominently forward only when it is necessary to take the sense of the meeting. On such occasions he may stand back a little from the crowd and say, "Well, orthodox, have you decided so?" and the crowd will probably shout, "*Ladno! ladno!*" that is to say, "Agreed! agreed!"

Communal measures are generally carried in this way by acclamation; but it sometimes happens that there is such a

decided diversity of opinion that it is difficult to tell which of the two parties has a majority. In this case the Elder requests the one party to stand to the right and the other to the left. The two groups are then counted, and the minority submits, for no one ever dreams of opposing openly the will of the "Mir."

Nearly half a century ago an attempt was made to regulate by the written law the procedure of Village Assemblies amongst the peasantry of the State Demesnes, and among other reforms voting by ballot was introduced ; but the new custom never struck root. The peasants did not regard with favor the new method, and persisted in calling it, contemptuously, "playing at marbles." Here, again, we have one of these wonderful and apparently anomalous facts which frequently meet the student of Russian affairs: the Emperor Nicholas, the Incarnation of Autocracy and the Champion of the Reactionary Party throughout Europe, forces the ballot-box, the ingenious invention of extreme radicals, on several millions of his subjects !

In the crowd may generally be seen, especially in the northern provinces, where a considerable portion of the male population is always absent from the village, a certain number of female peasants. These are women who, on account of the absence or death of their husbands, happen to be for the moment Heads of Households. As such they are entitled to be present, and their right to take part in the deliberations is never called in question. In matters affecting the general welfare of the Commune they rarely speak, and if they do venture to enounce an opinion on such occasions they have little chance of commanding attention, for the Russian peasantry are as yet little imbued with the modern doctrines of female equality, and express their opinion of female intelligence by the homely adage: "The hair is long, but the mind is short." According to one proverb, seven women have collectively but one soul, and according to a still more ungallant popular saying, women have no souls at all, but only a vapor. Woman, therefore, as woman, is not deserving of much consideration, but a particular woman, as head of a household is entitled to speak on all questions directly affecting the household under her care. If, for instance, it be proposed to increase or diminish her household's share of the land and the burdens, she will be allowed to speak freely on the subject, and even to indulge in a

little personal invective against her male opponents. She thereby exposes herself, it is true, to uncomplimentary remarks ; but any which she happens to receive she will probably repay with interest—referring, perhaps, with pertinent virulence to the domestic affairs of those who attack her. And when argument and invective fail, she is pretty sure to try the effect of pathetic appeal, supported by copious tears—a method of persuasion to which the Russian peasant is singularly insensible.

As the Village Assembly is really a representative institution, in the full sense of the term, it reflects faithfully the good and the bad qualities of the rural population. Its decisions are therefore usually characterized by plain, practical common sense, but it is subject to occasional unfortunate aberrations in consequence of pernicious influences, chiefly of an alcoholic kind. An instance of this fact occurred during my sojourn at Ivánofka. The question under discussion was whether a *kabák*, or gin-shop, should be established in the village. A trader from the district town desired to establish one, and offered to pay to the Commune a yearly sum for the necessary permission. The more industrious, respectable members of the Commune, backed by the whole female population of the locality, were strongly opposed to the project, knowing full well that a *kabák* would certainly lead to the ruin of more than one household ; but the enterprising trader had strong arguments wherewith to seduce a large number of the members, and succeeded in obtaining a decision in his favor.

The Assembly discusses all matters affecting the Communal welfare, and, as these matters have never been legally defined, and there is no means of appealing against its decisions, its recognized competence is very wide. It fixes the time for making the hay, and the day for commencing the plowing of the fallow field ; it decrees what measures shall be employed against those who do not punctually pay their taxes ; it decides whether a new member shall be admitted into the Commune, and whether an old member shall be allowed to change his domicile ; it gives or withholds permission to erect new buildings on the Communal land ; it prepares and signs all contracts which the Commune makes with one of its own members or with a stranger ; it interferes, whenever it thinks necessary, in the domestic affairs of its members ; it elects the Elder—as well as the Communal tax-collector, and watchman, where such offices exist—and the Com-

munal herd-boy ; above all, it divides and allots the Communal land among the members as it thinks fit.

Of all these various proceedings, the English reader may naturally assume that the elections are the most noisy and exciting. In reality this is a mistake. The elections produce little excitement, for the simple reason that, as a rule, no one desires to be elected. Once, it is said, a peasant who had been guilty of some misdemeanor was informed by an Arbiter of the Peace—a species of official of which I shall have much to say in the sequel—that he would be no longer capable of filling any Communal office ; and instead of regretting this diminution of his civil rights, he bowed very low, and respectfully expressed his thanks for the new privilege which he had acquired. This anecdote may not be true, but it illustrates the undoubted fact that the Russian peasant regards office as a burden rather than as an honor. There is no civic ambition in those little rural Commonwealths, whilst the privilege of wearing a bronze medal, which commands no respect, and the reception of a few roubles as salary, afford no adequate compensation for the trouble, annoyance, and responsibility which a Village Elder has to bear. The elections are therefore generally very tame and uninteresting. The following description may serve as an illustration.

It is a Sunday afternoon. The peasants, male and female, have turned out in Sunday attire, and the bright costumes of the women help the sunshine to put a little rich color into the scene, which is at ordinary times monotonously gray. Slowly the crowd collects on the open space at the side of the church. All classes of the population are represented. On the extreme outskirts are a band of fair-haired, merry children—some of them standing or lying on the grass and gazing attentively at the proceedings, and others running about and playing at tig. Close to these stand a group of young girls, convulsed with half-suppressed laughter. The cause of their merriment is a youth of some seventeen summers, evidently the wag of the village, who stands beside them with an accordion in his hand, and relates to them in a half-whisper how he is about to be elected Elder, and what mad pranks he will play in that capacity. When one of the girls happens to laugh outright, the matrons who are standing near turn round and scowl ; and one of them, stepping forward, orders the offender, in a tone of authority, to go home at once if she cannot

behave herself. Crest-fallen, the culprit retires, and the youth who is the cause of the merriment makes the incident the subject of a new joke. Meanwhile the deliberations have begun. The majority of the members are chatting together, or looking at a little group composed of three peasants and a woman, who are standing a little apart from the others. Here alone the matter in hand is being really discussed. The woman is explaining, with tears in her eyes, and with a vast amount of useless repetition, that her "old man," who is Elder for the time being, is very ill, and cannot fulfill his duties.

"But he has not yet served a year, and he'll get better," remarks one peasant, evidently the youngest of the little group.

"Who knows?" replies the woman, sobbing. "It is the will of God, but I don't believe that he'll ever put his foot to the ground again. The Feldsher has been four times to see him, and the doctor himself came once, and said that he must be brought to the hospital."

"And why has he not been taken there?"

"How could he be taken? Who is to carry him? Do you think he's a baby? The hospital is forty versts off. If you put him in a cart he would die before he had gone a verst. And then, who knows what they do with people in the hospital?" This last question contained probably the true reason why the doctor's orders had been disobeyed.

"Very well; that's enough; hold your tongue," says the gray beard of the little group to the woman; and then, turning to the other peasants, remarks, "There is nothing to be done. The Stanovoi (officer of rural police) will be here one of these days, and will make a row again if we don't elect a new Elder. Whom shall we choose?"

As soon as this question is asked, several peasants look down to the ground, or try in some other way to avoid attracting attention, lest their names should be suggested. When the silence has continued a minute or two, the gray beard says, "There is Alexei Ivánof; he has not served yet!"

"Yes, yes, Alexei Ivánof!" shout half a dozen voices, belonging probably to peasants who fear they may be elected.

Alexei protests in the strongest terms. He cannot say that he is ill, because his big ruddy face would give him the lie direct, but he finds half a dozen other reasons why he should not be

chosen, and accordingly requests to be excused. But his protestations are not listened to, and the proceedings terminate. A new Village Elder has been duly elected.

Far more important than the elections, is the redistribution of the Communal land. It can matter but little to the Head of a Household how the elections go, provided he himself is not chosen. He can accept with perfect equanimity Alexei, or Ivan, or Nikolai, because the office-bearers have very little influence in communal affairs. But he cannot remain a passive, indifferent spectator, when the division and allotment of the land come to be discussed, for the material welfare of every household depends to a great extent on the amount of land and of burdens which it receives.

In the southern provinces, where the soil is fertile, and the taxes do not exceed the normal rent, the process of division and allotment is comparatively simple. Here each peasant desires to get as much land as possible, and consequently each household demands all the land to which it is entitled—that is to say, a number of shares equal to the number of its members inscribed in the last revision list. The Assembly has, therefore, no difficult questions to decide. The Communal revision list determines the number of shares into which the land must be divided, and the number of shares to be allotted to each family. The only difficulty likely to arise is as to which particular shares a particular family shall receive, and this difficulty is commonly obviated by the custom of casting lots. There may be, it is true, some difference of opinion as to when a re-distribution should be made, but this question is easily decided by a simple vote of the Assembly.

Very different is the process of division and allotment in many Communes of the northern provinces. Here the soil is often very unfertile, and the taxes exceed the normal rent, and consequently it may happen that the peasants strive to have as little land as possible. In these cases such scenes as the following may occur.

Ivan is being asked how many shares of the Communal land he will take, and replies in a slow, contemplative way, "I have two sons, and there is myself, so I'll take three shares, or somewhat less if it is your pleasure."

"Less!" exclaims a middle-aged peasant, who is not the Village Elder, but merely an influential member, and takes the leading part in the proceedings. "You talk nonsense. Your two sons

are already old enough to help you, and soon they may get married, and so bring you two new female laborers."

"My eldest son," explains Ivan, "always works in Moscow, and the other often leaves me in summer."

"But they both send or bring home money, and when they get married, the wives will remain with you."

"God knows what will be," replies Ivan, passing over in silence the first part of his opponent's remark. "Who knows if they will marry?"

"You can easily arrange that!"

"That I cannot do. The times are changed now. The young people do as they wish, and when they do get married they all wish to have houses of their own. Three shares will be heavy enough for me!"

"No, no. If they wish to separate from you, they will take some land from you. You must take at least four. The old wives there who have little children cannot take shares according to the number of souls."

"He is a rich Muzhík!" (peasant), says a voice in the crowd. "Lay on him five souls!" (that is to say, give him five shares of the land and of the burdens).

"Five souls I cannot! By God, I cannot!"

"Very well, you shall have four," says the leading spirit to Ivan; and then, turning to the crowd, inquires, "Shall it be so?"

"Four! four!" murmurs the crowd; and the question is settled.

Next comes one of the old wives just referred to. Her husband is a permanent invalid, and she has three little boys, only one of whom is old enough for field labor. If the revision list were taken strictly as the basis of distribution, she would receive four shares; but she would never be able to pay four shares of the Communal burdens. She must therefore receive less than that amount. When asked how many she will take, she replies with downcast eyes, "As the Mir decides, so be it!"

"Then you must take three."

"What do you say, little father?" cries the woman, throwing off suddenly her air of subservient obedience. "Do you hear that, ye orthodox? They want to lay upon me three souls! Was such a thing ever heard of? Since St. Peter's Day my husband has been bed ridden—bewitched, it seems, for nothing does him

good. He cannot put a foot to the ground—all the same as if he were dead ; only he eats bread !”

“You talk nonsense,” says a neighbor ; “he was in the *kabák* (gin-shop) last week.”

“And you !” retorts the woman, wandering from the subject in hand ; “what did *you* do last parish fête ? Was it not you who got drunk and beat your wife till she roused the whole village with her shrieking ? And no further gone than last Sunday—*pfu* !”

“Listen !” says the old man sternly, cutting short the torrent of invective. “You must take at least two shares and a half. If you cannot manage it yourself, you can get some one to help you.”

“How can that be ? Where am I to get the money to pay a laborer ?” asks the woman, with much wailing and a flood of tears. “Have pity, ye orthodox, on the poor orphans ! God will reward you ;” and so on, and so on.

I need not weary the reader with a further description of these scenes, which are always very long and sometimes violent. All present are deeply interested, for the allotment of the land is by far the most important event in Russian peasant life, and the arrangement cannot be made without endless talking and discussion. After the number of shares for each family has been decided, the distribution of the lots gives rise to new difficulties. The families who have manured plentifully their land strive to get back their old lots, and the Commune respects their claims so far as these are consistent with the new arrangement ; but often it happens that it is impossible to conciliate private rights and Communal interests, and in such cases the former are sacrificed in a way that would not be tolerated by men of Anglo-Saxon race. This leads, however, to no serious consequences. The peasants are accustomed to work together in this way, to make concessions for the Communal welfare, and to bow unreservedly to the will of the Mir. I know of many instances where the peasants have set at defiance the authority of the police, of the provincial governor, and of the central Government itself, but I have never heard of any instance where the will of the Mir was openly opposed by one of its members.

In the preceding pages I have repeatedly spoken about “shares of the Communal land.” To prevent misconception, I must explain carefully what this expression means. A share does not mean simply a plot or parcel of land ; on the contrary, it always

contains at least four, and may contain a large number of distinct plots. We have here a new point of difference between the Russian village and the villages of Western Europe.

Communal land in Russia is of three kinds : the land on which the village is built, the arable land, and the meadow or hay-field. On the first of these each family possesses a house and garden, which are the hereditary property of the family, and are never affected by the periodical re-distributions. The other two kinds are both subject to re-distribution, but on somewhat different principles.

The whole of the Communal arable land is first of all divided into three fields, to suit the triennial rotation of crops already described, and each field is divided into a number of long narrow strips—corresponding to the number of male members in the Commune—as nearly as possible equal to each other in area and quality. Sometimes it is necessary to divide the field into several portions, according to the quality of the soil, and then to subdivide each of these portions into the requisite number of strips. Thus in all cases every household possesses at least one strip in each field ; and in those cases where subdivision is necessary, every household possesses a strip in each of the portions into which the field is subdivided. This complicated process of division and subdivision is accomplished by the peasants themselves, with the aid of simple measuring-rods, and the accuracy of the result is truly marvelous.

The meadow, which is reserved for the production of hay, is divided into the same number of shares as the arable land. There, however, the division and distribution take place not at irregular intervals, but annually. Every year, on a day fixed by the Assembly, the villagers proceed in a body to this part of their property, and divide it into the requisite number of portions. Lots are then cast, and each family at once mows the portion allotted to it. In some Communes the meadow is mown by all the peasants in common, and the hay afterwards distributed by lot among the families : but this system is by no means so frequently used.

As the whole of the Communal land thus resembles to some extent a big farm, it is necessary to make certain rules concerning cultivation. A family may sow what it likes in the land allotted to it, but all families must at least conform to the accepted system of rotation. In like manner, a family cannot begin the autumn plowing before the appointed time, because it would thereby in-

terfere with the rights of the other families, who use the fallow field as pasturage.

It is not a little strange that this primitive system of land tenure should have succeeded in living into the nineteenth century, and still more remarkable that the institution of which it forms an essential part should be regarded by many intelligent people as one of the great institutions of the future, and almost as a panacea for social and political evils. The explanation of these facts forms an interesting chapter of Russian social history.*

* Part of the above chapter I have already published in an article on "Russian Village Communities" in *Macmillan's Magazine* for June, 1876.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW THE COMMUNE HAS BEEN PRESERVED, AND WHAT IT IS TO EFFECT IN THE FUTURE.

Sweeping Reforms at the Commencement of the Present Reign—Protest against the *laissez faire* Principle—Fear of the Proletariate—English and Russian Methods of Legislation contrasted—Sanguine Expectations—Evil Consequences of the Communal System—The Commune of the Future—Proletariate of the Towns—The present state of things merely temporary.

THE reader is probably aware that a few years ago Russia was subjected to a series of sweeping reforms, including the Emancipation of the serfs and the creation of a new system of local self-government, and he may naturally wonder how it came to pass that a curious, primitive institution like the rural Commune succeeded in weathering the bureaucratic hurricane. This strange phenomenon I now proceed to explain, partly because the subject is in itself interesting, and partly because I hope thereby to throw some light on the peculiar intellectual condition of the Russian educated classes at the present time.

When it became evident, in 1857, that the serfs were about to be emancipated, many people assumed that the rural Commune would be entirely abolished, or at least radically modified. At that time many Russians were enthusiastic, indiscriminate admirers of English institutions, and believed, in common with the orthodox school of political economists, that England had acquired her commercial and industrial superiority by adopting the principle of individual liberty and unrestricted competition, or, as French writers term it, the *laissez faire, laissez passer* principle. This principle is plainly inconsistent with the rural Commune, which compels the peasantry to possess land, prevents an enterprising peasant from acquiring the land of his less enterprising neighbors, and places very considerable restric-

tions on the freedom of action of the individual members. Accordingly it was assumed that the rural Commune, being inconsistent with the modern spirit of progress, would find no place in the new *régime* of liberty which was about to be inaugurated.

No sooner had these ideas been announced in the Press than they called forth strenuous protests. In the crowd of protesters were two well-defined groups. On the one hand there were the so-called Slavophiles, a small band of patriotic, highly-educated Moscovites, who were strongly disposed to admire everything specifically Russian, and who habitually refused to bow the knee to the wisdom of Western Europe. These gentlemen, in a special organ which they had recently founded, pointed out to their countrymen that the Commune was a venerable and peculiarly Russian institution, which had mitigated in the past the baneful influence of serfage, and would certainly in the future confer inestimable benefits on the emancipated peasantry. The other group was animated with a very different spirit. They had no sympathy with national peculiarities, and no reverence for hoary antiquity. That the Commune was specifically Russian or Slavonic, and a remnant of primitive times, was in their eyes anything but a recommendation in its favor. Cosmopolitan in their tendencies, and absolutely free from all archæological sentimentality, they regarded the institution from the purely utilitarian point of view. They agreed, however, with the Slavophiles in thinking that its preservation would have a beneficial influence on the material and moral welfare of the peasantry.

For the sake of convenience it is necessary to designate this latter group by some definite name, but I confess I have some difficulty in making a choice. I do not wish to call these gentlemen Socialists, because many people habitually and involuntarily attach a stigma to the word, and believe that all to whom the term is applied must be first-cousins to the Pétroleuses. To avoid misconceptions of this kind, it will be well to designate them simply by the organ which most ably represented their views, and to call them the adherents of *The Contemporary*.

The Slavophiles and the adherents of *The Contemporary*, though differing widely from each other in many respects, had the same immediate object in view, and accordingly worked together. With great ingenuity they contended that the Communal system of land tenure had much greater advantages, and was attended

with much fewer inconveniences than people generally supposed. But they did not confine themselves to these immediate practical advantages, which had very little interest for the general reader. The importance of the rural Commune, they explained, lay not in the present, but in the future. In possessing it, Russia possessed a sure, preventive remedy against the greatest evil of West-European social organization, the Proletariate. Here the Slavophiles could strike in with their favorite refrain about the rotten social condition of Western Europe; and their temporary allies, though they did not believe in their doleful predictions, had no reason for the moment to contradict them. Very soon the Proletariate became, for the educated classes, a species of bugbear, and the reading public came to the conviction that the Communal institutions should be preserved as a means of excluding the monster from Russia.

This fear of what is vaguely termed the Proletariate is still frequently to be met with in Russia, and I have often taken pains to discover precisely what is meant by the term. I cannot, however, say that my efforts were attended with much success. The monster seems to be as vague and shadowy as the awful forms which Milton placed at the gate of the infernal regions. At one moment he seems to be simply our old enemy Pauperism, but when we approach a little nearer we find that he expands to colossal dimensions, so as to include all who do not possess inalienable landed property. In short, he turns out to be, on examination, as vague and undefinable as a good bugbear ought to be; and this vagueness contributed probably not a little to his success.

The influence which the idea of the Proletariate exercised on the public mind and on the legislation at the time of the Emancipation is a very notable fact, and well worthy of attention, because it helps to illustrate a point of difference between Russians and Englishmen.

Englishmen are, as a rule, too much occupied with the multifarious concerns of the present to look much ahead into the distant future. We profess, indeed, to regard with horror the maxim, "*Après nous le déluge!*" and we should probably annihilate with our virtuous indignation any one who should boldly profess the principle. And yet we often act almost as if we were really partisans of that heartless creed. When called upon to consider the interests of future generations, we declare

that "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof," and stigmatize as visionaries and dreamers all who seek to withdraw our attention from the immediate present. A bold prophet who confidently predicts the near exhaustion of our coal-fields, or graphically describes a crushing national disaster that may soon overtake us, may attract for a little the public attention; but when we learn that the misfortune is not to take place in our day, we placidly remark that future generations must take care of themselves, and that we cannot reasonably be expected to bear their burdens. When we are obliged to legislate, we proceed in a cautious, tentative way, and are quite satisfied with any homely, simple remedies that common sense and experience may suggest, without taking the trouble to inquire whether the remedy adopted is in accordance with scientific theories. In short, there is a certain truth in those "famous prophetick pictures," spoken of by Stillingfleet, which "represent the fate of England by a mole, a creature blind and busy, continually working under ground."

In Russia we find the opposite extreme. There reformers have been trained not in the arena of practical politics, but in the school of political speculation. As soon, therefore, as they begin to examine any simple matter with a view to legislation, it at once becomes a "question," and flies up into the region of political and social science. Whilst we have been for centuries groping along an unexplored path, the Russians have—at least, since the beginning of last century—been constantly mapping out, with the help of foreign experience, the country that lay before them, and advancing with gigantic strides according to the newest political theories. Men trained in this way cannot rest satisfied with homely remedies, which merely alleviate the evils of the moment. They wish to "tear up evil by the roots," and to legislate for future generations as well as for themselves.

This tendency was peculiarly strong at the commencement of the present reign. The educated classes were profoundly convinced that the system of Nicholas had been a mistake, and that a new and brighter era was about to dawn upon the country. Everything had to be reformed. The whole social and political edifice had to be reconstructed on entirely new principles.

Let us imagine the position of a man who, having no practical acquaintance with building, suddenly finds himself called upon to build a large house, containing all the newest appliances for

convenience and comfort. What will his first step be? Probably he will proceed at once to study the latest authorities on architecture and constructions, and when he has mastered the general principles he will come down gradually to the details. This is precisely what the Russians did when they found themselves called upon to reconstruct the political and social edifice. They eagerly consulted the most recent English, French, and German writers on social and political science, and here it was that they made the acquaintance of the Proletariate.

People who read books of travel without ever leaving their own country are very apt to acquire exaggerated notions regarding the hardships and dangers of uncivilized life. They read about savage tribes, daring robbers, ferocious wild beasts, poisonous snakes, deadly fevers, and the like ; and they cannot but wonder how a human being can exist for a week among such dangers. But if they happen thereafter to visit the countries described, they discover to their surprise that, though the descriptions may not have been exaggerated, life under such conditions is much easier than they supposed. Now the Russians who read about the Proletariate were very much like the people who remain at home and devour books of travel. They gained exaggerated notions, and learned to fear the Proletariate much more than we do, who habitually live in the midst of it. Of course it is quite possible that their view of the subject is truer than ours, and that we may some day, like the people who live tranquilly on the slopes of a volcano, be rudely awakened from our fancied security. But this is an entirely different question. I am at present not endeavoring to justify our habitual callousness with regard to social dangers, but simply seeking to explain why the Russians, who have little or no practical acquaintance with pauperism, should have taken such elaborate precautions against it.

But how can the preservation of the Communal institutions lead to this "consummation devoutly to be wished," and how far are the precautions likely to be successful?

Those who have studied the mysteries of social science have generally come to the conclusion that the Proletariate has been formed chiefly by the expropriation of the peasantry or small landholders, and that its formation might be prevented, or at least retarded, by any system of legislation which would secure the possession of land for the peasants and prevent them from

being uprooted from the soil. Now I venture to assert that no institution in the world fulfills this function more effectually than the Russian Communal system. At the present moment about one-half of the whole arable land of the Empire is thereby reserved for the peasantry, and cannot be encroached on by the great landowners or the capitalists, and every peasant by the simple fact of his birth acquires an almost inalienable right to a share of this land. When I have said that the peasantry compose about five-sixths of the population, and that it is extremely difficult—under ordinary circumstances almost impossible—for a peasant to sever his connection with the rural Commune, it will be at once evident that, if the theories of social philosophers be correct, the formation of a Proletariate in Russia must be almost an impossibility. If the sanguine expectations at present entertained are destined to be realized by experience, then it must be admitted that Russians may justly feel a considerable amount of patriotic exultation, and may fairly lay claim to having successfully solved one of the most important and most difficult of social problems.

But is there any reasonable chance of these sanguine expectations being realized?

This is, doubtless, a most difficult question, but it is not altogether unanswerable. Though it is always hazardous to make predictions, still the present often contains facts which give at least suggestive indications as to the future. Had the project remained in the brain of a solitary philosopher, or in the creed of some school of philosophers, it might perhaps have been reasonably treated with contempt as the ingenious device of a Utopian dreamer; but we cannot treat in this unceremonious fashion an idea that has already assumed a legislative form. However skeptical we may be with regard to social panaceas of all kinds, we ought surely to study attentively this gigantic experiment in social science, on the success of which depends, to a great extent, the material and moral welfare of forty million human beings!

If Russia were content to remain a purely agricultural country, the rural Commune might, I believe, prevent the formation of a Proletariate in the future, as it has already prevented it for centuries in the past. The periodical re-distributions of the Communal land would secure to every man a portion of the soil, and

if the population became too dense, the evils arising from extreme subdivision of the land might be obviated by a regular system of emigration to the outlying, thinly-populated provinces. It seems to me, however, that one part of the recent legislation, elaborated with a view to preserve the Commune, has in reality dealt a serious blow at the fundamental principle of the institution. By the law of 1861 the Commune is enabled to redeem the dues and become absolute proprietor of the land. This is effected by a series of yearly payments extending over nearly half a century, and each family contributes to these payments according to the amount of land which it possesses. Now the question is, Will these peasants, who have been paying for a certain definite amount of land, willingly submit to a re-distribution by which they will receive less than the amount for which they have paid? I think not. The redemption of the dues—or in other words the purchase of the land—has already considerably modified the peasants' conceptions of Communal property, and it may be remarked that in those Communes which have undertaken the redemption operation, re-distributions have become rare, or have entirely disappeared. This important fact seems to have been hitherto entirely overlooked.

Many people believe that the chief danger to which the Commune is exposed lies in an entirely different direction. The peasants, it is said, will very soon come to perceive that the immediate evil consequences of the Communal system far more than counter-balance its prospective advantages. The first condition of all agricultural progress is some species of land tenure, according to which the farmer may be sure that he will not be summarily ejected, and will enjoy peaceably the fruits of any improvements which he may make; the second condition is that the farmer be free to cultivate as he chooses, untrammelled by any restrictions except such as are necessary to prevent the undue exhaustion of the soil. Neither of these conditions is fulfilled by the Communal system. A re-distribution of the land may at any time be made by Communal decree, and each peasant is obliged to adopt a system of cultivation consistent with the Communal arrangements. Besides this the peasant does not receive a large parcel of land, but a certain number of strips in different fields. According to our notions of agriculture this must be a very bad system of land tenure. We can imagine the dismay of an English farmer who should dis-

cover that he had inadvertently taken a farm composed of various little plots situated at considerable distances from each other and from the farmhouse, that he could be summarily ejected by the arbitrary will of the owner, that he must conform to a certain rotation of crops, and that he must never begin to mow his hay or plow up the fallow-land without first receiving the permission of all his neighbors! ~ But it does not necessarily follow that the system is radically bad in a country where the economic and social conditions are entirely different from those with which we are practically acquainted.

How far the Communal system really presents obstacles to agricultural progress is in Russia one of the most hotly-contested questions of the present time. I refrain from entering on the discussion, because I should require to introduce a large quantity of technical details that would very soon exhaust the patience of the ordinary reader. Suffice it to say, briefly, that the obstacles do exist, but that they are not nearly so great as is commonly supposed. If it be said that the Commune prevents the peasant from adopting a system of high-farming, then it may be added that in the same sense the absence of universities on the prairies *prevents* the Redskins from distinguishing themselves in the domain of classical philology. The truth is that the peasants have not begun to think of anything approaching high-farming, and those of them who possess land of their own outside of the Communal boundary never introduce any improvements. The adherents of the institution declare that any obstacles which really exist might be easily removed by a little simple legislation, and that all possible objections to the system might be obviated by transforming the Commune into an agricultural association, in which all should work in common, and the products—not the land—should be divided. Some prescient persons venture to predict that this transformation will certainly take place, and describe in glowing colors the Commune of the future. Here is a specimen of these prophetic descriptions:—“The peasants have mastered the science of agriculture, and have become so enlightened, that they are always ready to undertake in common the necessary improvements. They no longer exhaust the soil by selling the grain, but sell merely certain technical products containing no mineral ingredients. For this purpose the Communes possess distilleries, starch-works, and the like, and the soil there-

by retains its original fertility. The scarcity induced by the natural increase of the population is counteracted by improved methods of cultivation. If the Chinese, who know nothing of natural science, have succeeded by purely empirical methods in perfecting agriculture to such an extent that a whole family can support itself on a few square yards of land, what may not the European do with the help of chemistry, botanical physiology, and the other natural sciences ? ”

This last sentence, which must be familiar to all who have read the works of the Communistic School, ought to remind us that we have inadvertently strayed into the very distant future. Let us return.

Even if it be admitted that the Commune effectually prevents the formation of an agricultural Proletariate, the question is thereby only half-answered. Russia aspires to become a great industrial and commercial country, and accordingly her town population is rapidly augmenting. We have still to consider, then, how the Commune affects the Proletariate of the towns. According to the official statistics for Russia Proper, the inhabitants of the towns constitute less than 8 per cent. of the population, whilst those who habitually dwell in the towns amount to about 10 per cent. ; in other words, about one million and a quarter of peasants habitually live in the towns. So say the official statistical tables, but the statement is doubtless greatly under the mark. Many more peasants, though inscribed in rural Communes, habitually spend in the towns a considerable part of the year.

Those peasants who habitually live in the towns compose a peculiar class, with which we have in England no practical acquaintance. In Western Europe the great center of industry have uprooted from the soil and collected in the towns a great part of the rural population. Those who yielded to this attractive influence severed all connection with their native villages, became unfit for field labor, and were rapidly transformed into artisans or factory-workers. In Russia this transformation could not easily take place. The peasant might work during the greater part of his life in the towns, but he did not thereby sever his connection with his native village. He remained, whether he desired it or not, a member of the Commune, possessing a share of the Communal land, and liable for a share of the Communal burdens.

During his residence in the town, his wife and family remained at home, and thither he himself sooner or later returned. In this way a class of hybrids—half-peasants, half-artisans—has been created, and the formation of a town Proletariate has been greatly retarded.

The existence of this hybrid class is commonly cited as a beneficent result of the Communal institutions. The artisans and factory laborers, it is said, have thus always a home to which they can retire when thrown out of work or overtaken by old age, and their children are brought up in the country, instead of being reared among the debilitating influences of overcrowded cities. Every common laborer has, in short, by this ingenious contrivance, a small capital and a country residence.

In the present transitional state of Russian society, this peculiar arrangement is at once natural and convenient, but amidst its advantages it has many serious defects. The unnatural separation of the artisan from his wife and family leads to very undesirable results, which cannot with propriety be described here, but which are well known to all who are familiar with the details of peasant life in the northern provinces. And whatever its advantages and defects may be, it cannot be permanently retained. At the present time the native industry is still in its infancy. Protected by the tariff from foreign competition, and too few in number to produce a strong competition among themselves, the existing factories can give to their owners a large revenue without any strenuous exertion. Manufacturers can therefore allow themselves many little liberties, which would be quite inadmissible if the price of manufactured goods was lowered by brisk competition. Ask a Lancashire manufacturer if he could allow a large portion of his workers to go yearly to Cornwall or Caithness to mow a field of hay or reap a few acres of wheat ! And if Russia is to make great industrial progress, the manufacturers of Ivánovo and Shui will some day be as hard pressed as are those of Bradford and Manchester at the present time. Already some of the great manufacturers give higher wages to those workers who consent to remain the whole year, and the cry is already being raised that the small manufacturers, who a few years ago made respectable profits, are being ruined by the great factories, which can produce goods at a lower price. Thus the movement has begun, and cannot be stopped by any abstract theories. Very soon a similar change

must take place among the artisans. The invariable tendency of modern industry, and the secret of its progress, is the ever-increasing division of labor ; and how can this principle be applied if the artisans insist on being agriculturists ?

Thus the theory that factory-workers and artisans will long remain agriculturists and preserve their semi-peasant character, is at variance with commonsense and experience ; but may they not at least remain members of the rural Commune, and thus enjoy, in common with their rich employers, the advantages of a country residence ? This idea has a seductive charm for those who content themselves with vague conceptions, but it will not bear close inspection. That it is very desirable for every workman to have a house of his own is unquestionable, but the house can scarcely be called a home, when it is situated hundreds of miles from the place where the workman is obliged to live. In this case he has all the burdens without the advantages of family life. The interests of agriculture, too, are opposed to this arrangement. Agriculture cannot be expected to make progress, or even to be tolerably productive, if it is left in great measure to women and children. For many reasons it is not desirable that the link which binds the factory-worker or artisan with the village should be at once dissolved. In the neighborhood of the large factories there is no proper accommodation for the families of the workers, and agriculture, as at present practised, can be carried on successfully, though the Head of the Household happens to be absent. But the system must be regarded as simply temporary, and the disruption of large families—a phenomenon of which I have already spoken—renders its application more and more difficult.

Though it may be confidently asserted that the Commune will sooner or later undergo profound modifications, it is not easy to predict what form it will ultimately assume. Perhaps all its peculiarities will disappear, and it will become merely an organ of local self-government ; but, on the other hand, perhaps it will modify itself in accordance with new requirements, without abolishing its present fundamental characteristics, and succeed in partly realizing the sanguine expectations of its admirers. The facility with which it has hitherto adapted itself to circumstances, and the vigorous vitality which it everywhere displays, tend to justify these expectations ; but it is still too soon to speak with confidence. Time alone can solve the problem.

CHAPTER X.

FINNISH AND TARTAR VILLAGES.

A Finnish Tribe—Finnish Villages—Various Stages of Russification—Finnish Women—Finnish Religions—Method of "laying" Ghosts—Curious Mixture of Christianity and Paganism—Conversion of the Finns—A Tartar Village—A Russian Peasant's Conceptions of Mahometanism—A Mahometan's View of Christianity—Propaganda—The Russian Colonist—Migrations of Peoples during the Dark Ages.

WHEN talking one day with a landed proprietor who lived near Ivánofka, I accidentally discovered that there were in the neighborhood certain villages, the inhabitants of which could neither speak nor understand the Russian language, and habitually used a peculiar language of their own. With an illogical hastiness worthy of a genuine ethnologist, I at once assumed that these must be the remnants of some aboriginal race.

"Des aborigènes!" I exclaimed, unable to recall the Russian equivalent for the term, and knowing that my friend understood French. "Doubtless the remains of some ancient race who formerly held the country, and are now rapidly disappearing. Have you any Aborigines Protection Society in this part of the world?"

My friend had evidently great difficulty in imagining what an Aborigines Protection Society could be, and ventured to assert that there was nothing of the kind in Russia. On being told that such a society might render valuable services by protecting the weaker against the stronger race, and collecting important materials for the new science of Social Embryology, he looked thoroughly mystified. As to the new science, he had never heard of it, and as to protection, he thought that the inhabitants of the villages in question were quite capable of protecting themselves. "I could invent," he added, with a malicious smile, "a society for the protection of *all* peasants, but I am quite sure that the authorities would not allow me."

My ethnological curiosity was thoroughly aroused, and I endeavored to awaken a similar feeling in my friend by hinting that we had at hand a promising field for discoveries which might immortalize the fortunate explorers; but my efforts were in vain. My friend was a portly, indolent man, of phlegmatic temperament, who thought more of comfort than of immortality in the terrestrial sense of the term. To my proposal that we should start at once on an exploring expedition, he replied calmly that the distance was considerable, that the roads were muddy, and that there was nothing to be learned. It was already time to have our *zakuska*—that is to say, a glass of vodka, together with caviar, raw salt herring, pickled mushrooms, or some such viand as an appetizer before dinner. Why should we sacrifice a comfortable dinner and the after-dinner siesta to an expedition of the kind? The villages in question were like other villages, and their inhabitants lived, to all intents and purposes, in the same way as their Russian neighbors. If they had any secret peculiarities, they would certainly not divulge them to a stranger, for they were notoriously silent, gloomy, morose, and uncommunicative. Everything that was known about them, my friend assured me, might be communicated in a few words. They belonged to a Finnish tribe called Corelli, and had been transported to their present settlements in comparatively recent times. In answer to my questions as to how, when, and by whom they had been transported thither, my informant replied that it had been the work of Ivan the Terrible.

Though I knew at that time little of Russian history, I had strong reason to suspect that the last assertion was invented on the spur of the moment, in order to satisfy my troublesome curiosity, and accordingly determined not to accept it without verification. The result showed how careful the traveler should be in accepting the testimony of "intelligent, well-informed natives." On further investigation, I discovered not only that the story about Ivan the Terrible was a pure invention—whether of my friend or of the popular imagination, which always uses heroic names as pegs on which to hang traditions, I know not—but also that my first theory was correct. These Finnish peasants turned out to be a remnant of the aborigines, or at least of the oldest known inhabitants of the district. The Russian peasants, who now compose the great mass of the population, are the intruders.

I had long taken a deep interest in what learned Germans call the *Völkerwanderung*—that is to say, the migrations of peoples during the gradual dissolution of the Roman Empire, and it had often occurred to me that the most approved authorities, who had expended an infinite amount of learning on the subject, had rarely or never taken the trouble to investigate the nature of the process. It is not enough to know that a race or tribe extended its dominions or changed its geographical position. We ought at the same time to inquire whether it expelled, exterminated, or absorbed the former inhabitants, and how the expulsion, extermination, or absorption was effected. Now, of these three processes, absorption was in all probability the most frequent, and it seemed to me that in Northern Russia this process might be conveniently studied. A thousand years ago the whole of Northern Russia was peopled by Finnish tribes, and at the present day the greater part of it is occupied by peasants who speak the language of Moscow, profess the orthodox faith, present in their physiognomy no striking peculiarities, and appear to the superficial observer pure Russians. And we have no reason to suppose that the former inhabitants were expelled or exterminated, or that they gradually died out from contact with the civilization and vices of a higher race. History records no wholesale migrations like that of the Kalmyks, and no war of extermination; and statistics prove that among the remnants of those primitive races the population increases as rapidly as among the Russian peasantry.* From these facts I concluded that the Finnish Aborigines had been simply absorbed by the Slavonic intruders.

This conclusion has since been amply confirmed by observation. During my wanderings in these northern provinces I have found villages in every stage of Russification. In one, everything seemed thoroughly Finnish: the inhabitants had a reddish-olive skin, very high cheek-bones, obliquely-set eyes, and a peculiar costume; none of the women, and very few of the men, could understand Russian, and any Russian who visited the place was regarded as a foreigner. In a second, there were already some Russian inhabitants; the others had lost something of their pure Finnish type,

* This latter statement is made on the authority of Popoff ("Zyryanye i zyryanski krai," Moscow, 1874) and Tcheremshanski ("Opisanie Orenburgskoi Gubernii," Ufa, 1859).

many of the men had discarded the old costume, and spoke Russian fluently, and a Russian visitor was no longer shunned. In a third, the Finnish type was still further weakened : all the men spoke Russian, and nearly all the women understood it ; the old male costume had entirely disappeared, and the old female costume was rapidly following it ; and intermarriage with the Russian population was no longer rare. In a fourth, intermarriage had almost completely done its work, and the old Finnish element could be detected merely in certain peculiarities of physiognomy and accent.

The process of Russification may be likewise observed in the manner of building the houses and in the methods of farming, which show plainly that the Finnish races did not obtain rudimentary civilization from the Slavonians. Whence, then, was it derived ? Was it obtained from some other race, or is it indigenous ? These are questions as to which I do not venture, for the present, even to hazard a conjecture ; I am not without hope, however, that I may, by future travel and investigation, be able to throw some light on the subject.

A Positivist poet—or if that be a contradiction in terms, let us say a Positivist who wrote verses—once composed an appeal to the fair sex, beginning with the words, if my memory does not deceive me—

“ *Pourquoi, O femmes, restez-vous en arrière ?* ”

The question might have been addressed to the women in these Finnish villages. Like their sisters in France, they are much more conservative than the men, and oppose much more stubbornly the Russian influence. On the other hand, like women in general, when they do begin to change, they change more rapidly. This is seen especially in the matter of costume, which has more importance than learned ethnologists are wont to suppose. The men adopt the Russian costume very gradually ; the women adopt it at once. As soon as a single woman gets a gaudy Russian dress, every other woman in the village feels envious and impatient till she has done likewise. I remember once visiting a village when this critical point had been reached, and a very characteristic incident occurred. In the preceding villages through which I had passed I had tried in vain to buy a female costume, and I again made the attempt. This time the result was very different. A

few minutes after I had expressed my wish to purchase a costume, the house in which I was sitting was besieged by a great crowd of women, holding in their hands articles of wearing apparel. In order to make a selection I went out into the crowd, but the desire to find a purchaser was so general and so ardent that I was regularly mobbed. The women, shouting "*Kupí! kupí!*" ("Buy! buy!"), and struggling with each other to get near me, were as importunate as a crowd of Italian beggars, and I had at last to take refuge in the house, to prevent my own costume from being torn to shreds. But even then I was not safe, for the women followed at my heels, and a considerable amount of good-natured violence had to be employed to expel the intruders.

It is especially interesting to observe this transformation of nationality in the sphere of religious conceptions. The Finns remained pagans long after the Russians had become Christians, but at the present time the whole population, from the eastern boundary of Finland Proper—which runs due north from a point near St. Petersburg to the Polar Ocean—to the Ural mountains, are officially described as members of the Greek Orthodox Church. The manner in which this change of religion was effected is well worthy of attention.

The old religion of the Finnish tribes, if we may judge from the fragments which still remain, had, like the people themselves, a thoroughly practical, prosaic character. Their theology consisted not of abstract dogmas, but merely of simple prescriptions for the insuring of material welfare. Even at the present day, in the districts not completely Russified, their prayers are plain, unadorned requests for a good harvest, plenty of cattle, and the like, and are expressed in a tone of childlike familiarity that sounds strange in our ears. They make no attempt to veil their desires with mystic solemnity, but ask in a simple, straightforward way that God should make the barley ripen and the cow calve successfully, that He should prevent their horses from being stolen, and that He should help them to gain money to pay their taxes. Their religious ceremonies have, so far as I have been able to discover, no hidden, mystical signification, and are for the most part rather magical rites for averting the influence of malicious spirits, or freeing themselves from the unwelcome visits of their departed relatives. For this latter purpose many, even of those who are officially Christians, proceed at stated seasons to the graveyards,

and place an abundant supply of cooked food on the graves of their relations who have recently died, requesting the departed to accept this meal, and not to return to their old homes, where their presence is no longer desired. Though more of the food is eaten at night by the village dogs than by the famished spirits, the custom is believed to have a powerful influence in preventing the dead from wandering about at night and frightening the living. If it be true, as I am inclined to believe, that tombstones were originally used for keeping the dead in their graves, then it must be admitted that in the matter of "laying" ghosts the Finns have shown themselves much more humane than other races. It may, however, be suggested that in the original home of the Finns—"le berceau de la race," as French ethnologists say—stones could not easily be procured, and that the custom of feeding the dead was adopted as a *pis aller*. The decision of the question must be left to those who know with certainty where the original home of the Finns was.

The Russian peasantry, though nominally Christians, have never differed very widely from the pagan Finns in the matter of religious conceptions. They, too, know little or nothing of theology, as we understand the term, and place implicit confidence in rites and ceremonies. Of this I have already spoken in a former chapter.

The friendly contact of two such races naturally led to a curious blending of the two religions. The Russians adopted many customs from the Finns, and the Finns adopted still more from the Russians. When Yumala and the other Finnish deities did not do as they were desired, their worshipers naturally applied for protection or assistance to the Madonna and the "Russian God." If their own traditional magic rites did not suffice to ward off evil influences, they naturally tried the effect of crossing themselves as the Russians do in moments of danger. All this may seem strange to us who have been taught from our earliest years that religion is something quite different from spells, charms, and incantations, and that of all the various religions in the world one alone is true, whilst all the others are false. But we ought to remember that the Finns have had a very different education. They do not distinguish religion from magic rites, and they have never been taught that other religions are less true than their own. For them the best religion is the one which contains the

most potent spells, but they see no reason why less powerful religions should not be blended therewith. Their deities are not jealous gods, and do not insist on having a monopoly of devotion; and in any case they cannot do much injury to those who have placed themselves under the protection of a more powerful divinity.

This simple-minded eclecticism often produces a singular mixture of Christianity and paganism. Thus, for instance, at the harvest festivals, Tchuvash peasants have been known to pray first to their own deities, and then to St. Nicholas, the miracle-worker, who is the favorite saint of the Russian peasantry. This dual worship is sometimes even recommended by the Yomzi—a class of men who correspond to the medicine-men among the Red Indians—and the prayers are on these occasions couched in the most familiar terms. Here is a specimen given by a Russian, who has specially studied the language and customs of this interesting people: * “Look here, O Nicholas-god! Perhaps my neighbor, little Michael, has been slandering me to you, or perhaps he will do so. If he does, don’t believe him. I have done him no ill, and wish him none. He is a worthless boaster and a babbler. He does not really honor you, and merely plays the hypocrite. But I honor you from my heart; and, behold, I place a taper before you!” Sometimes incidents occur which display a still more curious blending of the two religions. Thus a Tcheremiss, on one occasion, in consequence of a serious illness, sacrificed a young foal to Our Lady of Kazan!

Though the Finnish beliefs affected to some extent the Russian peasantry, the Russian faith ultimately prevailed. This can be explained without taking into consideration the inherent superiority of Christianity over all forms of paganism. The Finns had no organized priesthood, and consequently never offered a systematic opposition to the new faith; the Russians, on the contrary, had a regular hierarchy closely allied to the civil administration. In the principal villages Christian churches were built, and some of the police-officers vied with the ecclesiastical officials in the work of making converts. Besides this there were other influences tending in the same direction. If a Russian practised Finnish superstitions he exposed himself to disagreeable consequences of

* Mr. Zolotnitski, “Tchuvasko russki slovar,” p. 167.

a temporal kind ; if, on the contrary, a Finn adopted the Christian religion, the temporal consequences that could result were all advantageous to him. Many of the Finns gradually became Christians almost unconsciously. The ecclesiastical authorities were extremely moderate in their demands. They insisted on no religious knowledge, and merely demanded that the converts should be baptized. As the converts failed to understand the spiritual significance of the ceremony, they commonly offered no resistance, so long as the immersion was performed in summer. So little repugnance, indeed, did they feel, that on some occasions, when a small reward was given to those who consented, some of the new converts wished the ceremony to be repeated several times. The chief objection to receiving the Christian faith lay in the long and severe fasts imposed by the Greek Orthodox Church ; but this difficulty was overcome by assuming that they need not be strictly observed. At first, in some districts, it was popularly believed that the Icons informed the Russian priests against those who did not fast as the Church prescribed ; but experience gradually exploded this theory. Some of the more prudent converts, however, to prevent all possible tale-telling, took the precaution of turning the face of the Icon to the wall when prohibited meats were about to be eaten.

This gradual conversion of the Finnish tribes, effected without any intellectual revolution in the minds of the converts, had very important temporal consequences. Community of faith led to intermarriage, and intermarriage led rapidly to the blending of the two races.

If we compare a Finnish village in any stage of Russification with a Tartar village, of which the inhabitants are Mahometans, we cannot fail to be struck by the contrast. In the latter, though there may be many Russians, there is no blending of the two races. Between them religion has raised an impassable barrier. There are many villages in the eastern and north-eastern provinces of European Russia which have been for many generations half Tartar and half Russian, and the amalgamation of the two nationalities has not yet begun. Near the one end stands the Christian church, and near the other stands the little Metchet, or Mahometan house of prayer. The whole village forms one Commune, with one Village Assembly and one Village Elder ; but, socially, it is composed of two distinct communities, each possessing its

peculiar customs and peculiar mode of life. The Tartar may learn the Russian language, but he does not on that account become Russianized. It must not, however, be supposed that the two races are imbued with fanatical hatred towards each other. On the contrary, they live in perfectly good fellowship, elect as Village Elder sometimes a Russian and sometimes a Tartar, and discuss the Communal affairs in the Village Assembly without reference to religious matters. I know one village where the good-fellowship went even a step further: the Christians determined to repair their church, and the Mahometans helped them to transport wood for the purpose! All this tends to show that under a tolerably good government, which does not favor one race at the expense of the other, Mahometan Tartars and Christian Slavs can live peaceably together.

The absence of fanaticism and of that proselytizing zeal, which is one of the most prolific sources of religious hatred, is to be explained by the peculiar religious conceptions of these peasants. In their minds religion and nationality are so closely allied as to be almost identical. The Russian is, as it were, by nature a Christian, and the Tartar a Mahometan; and it never occurs to any one in these villages to disturb the appointed order of nature. On this subject I had once an interesting conversation with a Russian peasant, who had been for some time living among Tartars. In reply to my question as to what kind of people the Tartars were, he replied, laconically, "Nitchewo"—that is to say, "nothing in particular;" and on being pressed for a more definite expression of opinion, he admitted that they were very good people indeed.

"And what kind of faith have they?" I continued.

"A good enough faith," was the prompt reply.

"Is it better than the faith of the Molokani?" The Molokani are Russian sectarians—closely resembling Scotch presbyterians—of whom I shall have more to say in the sequel.

"Of course it is better than the Molokan faith."

"Indeed!" I exclaimed, endeavoring to conceal my astonishment at this strange judgment. "Are the Molokani, then, very bad people?"

"Not at all. The Molokani are good and honest."

"Why, then, do you think their faith is so much worse than that of the Mahometans?"

“How shall I tell you?” The peasant here paused as if to collect his thoughts, and then proceeded slowly, “The Tartars, you see, received their faith from God as they received the color of their skins, but the Molokani are Russians, who have invented a faith out of their own heads!”

This singular answer scarcely requires a commentary. As it would be absurd to try to make Tartars change the color of their skins, so it would be absurd to try to make them change their religion. Besides this, such an attempt would be an unjustifiable interference with the designs of Providence, for, in the peasant’s opinion, God gave Mahometanism to the Tartars just as he gave the orthodox faith to the Russians.

The ecclesiastical authorities do not formally adopt this strange theory, but they generally act in accordance with it. There is little official propaganda among the Mahometan subjects of the Tsar, and it is well that it is so; for an energetic propaganda would lead merely to the stirring up of any latent hostility which may exist deep down in the nature of the two races, and it would not make any real converts. The Tartars cannot unconsciously imbibe Christianity as the Finns have done. Their religion is not a rude, simple paganism without theology in the scholastic sense of the term, but a monotheism as exclusive as Christianity itself. Enter into conversation with an intelligent man who has no higher religious belief than a rude sort of paganism, and you may, if you know him well and make a judicious use of your knowledge, easily interest him in the touching story of Christ’s life and teaching. And in these unsophisticated natures there is but one step from interest and sympathy to conversion. Try the same method with a Mussulman, and you will soon find that all your efforts are fruitless. He has already a theology and a prophet of his own, and sees no reason why he should exchange them for those which you have to offer. Perhaps he will show you more or less openly that he pities your ignorance, and wonders that you have not been able to *advance* from Christianity to Mahometanism. In his opinion—I am supposing that he is a man of education—Moses and Christ were great prophets in their day, and consequently he is accustomed to respect their memory; but he is profoundly convinced that, however appropriate they were for their own times, they have been entirely superseded by Mahomet, precisely as we believe that Judaism was superseded by

Christianity. Proud of his superior knowledge, he regards you as a benighted polytheist, and may perhaps tell you that the orthodox Christians with whom he comes in contact have three Gods and a host of lesser deities called saints, that they pray to idols called Icons, and that they keep their holy days by getting drunk. In vain you endeavor to explain to him that saints and Icons are not essential parts of Christianity, and that habits of intoxication have no religious significance. On these points he may make concessions to you, but the doctrine of the Trinity remains for him a fatal stumbling-block. "You Christians had a great prophet," he will say, "but you deified him, and now you declare that he is the equal of Allah. Far from us be such blasphemy! There is but one God, and Mahomet is His prophet."

The policy of religious non-intervention has not always been practiced by the Government. Soon after the conquest of the Khanate of Kazan in the sixteenth century, the Tsars of Muscovy attempted to convert the new subjects from Mahometanism to Christianity. The means employed were partly spiritual and partly administrative, but the police-officers seem to have played a more important part than the clergy. In this way a certain number of Tartars were baptized; but the authorities were obliged to admit that the new converts "shamelessly retain many horrid Tartar customs, and neither hold nor know the Christian faith." When spiritual exhortations failed, the Government ordered its officials to "pacify, imprison, put in irons, and thereby *unteach* and frighten from the Tartar faith those who, though baptized, do not obey the admonitions of the Metropolitan." These energetic measures proved as ineffectual as the spiritual exhortations; and Catherine II. adopted a new method, highly characteristic of her system of administration. The new converts—who, be it remembered, were unable to read and write—were ordered by Imperial ukaz to sign a written promise to the effect that "they would completely forsake their infidel errors, and, avoiding all intercourse with unbelievers, would hold firmly and unwaveringly the Christian faith and its dogmas"—of which latter, we may add, they had not the slightest knowledge. The childlike faith in the magical efficacy of stamped paper here

*"Ukaz Kazanskoi dukhovnoi Konsistorii." Anno 1778.

displayed was not justified. The so-called "baptized Tartars" are at the present time as far from being Christians as they were in the sixteenth century. They cannot openly profess Mahometanism, because men who have been once formally admitted into the National Church cannot leave it without exposing themselves to the severe pains and penalties of the criminal code, but they strongly object to be Christianized. On this subject I have found a remarkable admission in a semi-official article, published as recently as 1872.* "It is a fact worthy of attention," says the writer, "that a long series of evident apostasies coincides with the beginning of measures to confirm the converts in the Christian faith. There must be, therefore, some collateral cause producing those cases of apostasy precisely at the moment when the contrary might be expected." There is a delightful naïveté in this way of stating the fact. The mysterious cause vaguely indicated is not difficult to find. So long as the Government demanded merely that the supposed converts should be inscribed as Christians in the official registers, there was no official apostasy; but as soon as active measures began to be taken "to confirm the converts," a spirit of hostility and fanaticism appeared among the Mussulman population, and made those who were inscribed as Christians resist the propaganda.

It may safely be said that Christians are impervious to Islam, and genuine Mussulmans impervious to Christianity; but between the two there are certain tribes, or fractions of tribes, which present a promising field for missionary enterprise. In this field the Tartars show much more zeal than the Russians, and possess certain advantages over their rivals. The tribes of North-eastern Russia learn Tartar much more easily than Russian, and their geographical position and modes of life bring them in contact with Russians much less than with Tartars. The consequence is that whole villages of Tcheremiss and Votiaks, officially inscribed as belonging to the Greek Orthodox Church, have openly declared themselves Mahometans; and some of the more remarkable conversions have been commemorated by popular songs, which are sung by young and old. Against this propaganda the orthodox ecclesiastical authorities do little or nothing. Though the criminal code contains severe enactments against those who fall

* "Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosveshcheniya." June, 1872.

away from the Orthodox Church, and still more against those who produce apostasy,* the enactments are rarely put in force. Both clergy and laity in the Russian Church are, as a rule, very tolerant where no political questions are involved. The parish priest pays attention to apostasy only when it diminishes his annual revenues, and this can be easily avoided by the apostates paying a small yearly sum. If this precaution be taken, whole villages may be converted to Islam without the higher ecclesiastical authorities knowing anything of the matter.

Whether the barrier that separates Christians and Mussulmans in Russia, as elsewhere, will ever be broken down by education, I do not venture to predict; but I may remark that hitherto the spread of education among the Tartars has tended rather to inflame them with fanaticism. If we remember that theological education always produces intolerance, and that Tartar education is almost exclusively theological, we shall not be surprised to find that a Tartar's religious fanaticism is generally in direct proportion to the amount of his intellectual culture. The unlettered Tartar, unspoiled by learning falsely so called, and knowing merely enough of his religion to perform the customary ordinances prescribed by the Prophet, is peaceable, kindly, and hospitable towards all men; but the learned Tartar, who has been taught that the Christian is a *Kiafir* (infidel), and a *Müşrik* (polytheist), odious in the sight of Allah, and already condemned to eternal punishment, is as intolerant and fanatical as the most bigoted Roman Catholic or Calvinist. Such fanatics are occasionally to be met with in the eastern provinces, but they are few in number, and have little influence on the masses. From my own experience I can testify that during the whole course of my wanderings I have nowhere received more kindness and hospitality than among the uneducated Mussulman Bashkirs. Even here, however, Islam opposes a strong barrier to Russification.

Though no such barrier existed among the pagan Finnish tribes, the work of Russification among them is still, as I have already indicated, far from complete. Not only whole villages, but even

* A person convicted of converting a Christian to Islam is sentenced, according to the criminal code, to the loss of all civil rights, and to imprisonment with hard labor for a term varying from eight to ten years ("Ulozhenie o Nakazaniakh," § 184).

many entire districts are still very little affected by Russian influence. This is to be explained partly by geographical conditions. In regions which have a poor soil, and are intersected by no navigable river, there are few or no Russian settlers, and consequently the Finns have there preserved intact their language and customs; whilst in those districts which present more inducements to colonization, the Russian population is more numerous, and the Finns less conservative. It must, however, be admitted that geographical conditions do not completely explain the facts. The various tribes, even when placed in the same conditions, are not equally susceptible to foreign influence. The Mordvá, for instance, are infinitely less conservative than the Tchuvash. This I have often noticed, and my impression has been confirmed by men who have had more opportunities of observation. For the present we must attribute this to some occult ethnological peculiarity, but future investigations may some day supply a more satisfactory explanation. Already I have obtained some facts which appear to throw light on the subject. The Tchuvash have certain customs which seem to indicate that they were formerly, if not avowed Mahometans, at least under the influence of Islam, whilst we have no reason to suppose that the Mordvá ever passed through that school.

The absence of religious fanaticism greatly facilitated Russian colonization in these northern regions, and the essentially peaceful disposition of the Russian peasantry tended in the same direction. The Russian peasant is admirably fitted for the work of peaceful agricultural colonization. Among uncivilized tribes he is good-natured, long-suffering, conciliatory, capable of bearing extreme hardships, and endowed with a marvelous power of adapting himself to circumstances. The haughty consciousness of personal and national superiority, and the irrepressible thirst for domination, which often transform liberty-loving, law-respecting Britons into cruel tyrants when they come in contact with a weaker race, are entirely foreign to his character. He has no desire to rule, and no wish to make the natives hewers of wood and drawers of water. All he desires is a few acres of land, which he can himself cultivate; and so long as he is allowed to enjoy these, he is not likely to molest his neighbors. Had the colonists of the Finnish country been men of Anglo-Saxon race, they would in all probability have taken possession of the land and reduced

the natives to the condition of agricultural laborers. The Russian colonists have contented themselves with a humbler and less aggressive mode of action; they have settled peaceably among the native population, and are rapidly becoming blended with it. In many districts the so-called Russians have perhaps more Finnish than Slavonic blood in their veins.

But what has all this to do, it may be asked, with the aforementioned *Völkerwanderung*, or migration of peoples, during the Dark Ages? More than may at first sight appear. Some of the so-called migrations were, I believe, not at all migrations in the ordinary sense of the term, but rather gradual changes, such as those which have taken place, and are still taking place, in Northern Russia. A thousand years ago what is now known as the province of Yaroslaff was inhabited by Finns, and now it is occupied by men who are commonly regarded as pure Slavonians. But it would be an utter mistake to suppose that the Finns of this district migrated to those more distant regions where they are now to be found. In reality they formerly occupied the whole of the North of Russia, and in the province of Yaroslaff they have been absorbed by the advancing Slavonians. In the West the Slavonians may be said in a certain sense to have retreated, for in former times they occupied the whole of Northern Germany as far as the Elbe. But what does the word "retreat" mean in this case? It means simply that the Slavonians were gradually Teutonized, and then absorbed by the Teutonic race. Some tribes, it is true, swept over a part of Europe in genuine nomadic fashion, and endeavored perhaps to expel or exterminate the actual possessors of the soil. This kind of migration may likewise be studied in Russia. But I must leave the subject till I come to speak of the southern provinces.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TOWNS AND THE MERCANTILE CLASSES.

Novgorod—General Character of Russian Towns—Scarcity of Towns in Russia—Why the Urban Element in the Population is so small—History of Russian Municipal Institutions—Unsuccessful Efforts to create a *Tiers-état*—Merchants, Burghers, and Artisans—Town Council—A rich Merchant—His House—His Love of Ostentation—His Conception of Aristocracy—Official Decorations—Ignorance and Dishonesty of the Commercial Classes—Symptoms of Change.

COUNTRY life in Russia is pleasant enough in summer or in winter, but between summer and winter there is an intermediate period of several weeks, when the rain and mud transform a country house into something very like a prison. To escape this durance vile I determined at the beginning of October to leave Ivánofka, and chose as my head-quarters for the next few months the town of Novgorod.

For this choice there were several reasons. I did not wish to go to St. Petersburg or Moscow, because I foresaw that in either of these cities my studies would certainly be interrupted. In a provincial town I should have much more chance of coming in contact with people who could not speak fluently any of the western languages, and much better opportunities of studying the provincial administration. Of all the chief towns, Novgorod* was the nearest, and in many respects the most interesting. It has had a curious history—a history much older than that of St. Petersburg or even of Moscow—and it still possesses many venerable historical monuments. Though now a town of third-rate importance—a mere shadow of its former self—it still contains about 18,000 inhabitants, and is the administrative center of the province in which it is situated.

* This town must not be confounded with Nizhni-Novgorod—that is, Lower Novgorod—on the Volga, where the great annual fair is held.

At about eighty miles from St. Petersburg the Moscow railway crosses the Volkhof, a rapid, muddy river, which connects Lake Ilmen with Lake Ladoga. At the point of intersection I got on board a small steamer, and sailed up the river for about fifty miles. The journey was tedious, for the country is flat and monotonous, and the steamer did not make more than nine knots an hour. Towards sunset Novgorod appeared on the horizon. Seen thus, in the soft twilight, the town appears decidedly picturesque. On the western bank of the river stands the kremlin, a slightly-elevated piece of ground surrounded by high brick walls, over which peep the painted cupolas of the cathedral. On the opposite bank stands the larger part of the town, the sky-line of which is agreeably broken by the green roofs and pear-shaped cupolas of many churches. Here and there a bit of foliage indicates the existence of gardens. Spanning the river between the kremlin and the town on the opposite bank is a long stone bridge, half hidden by a high temporary wooden bridge, which does duty—or at least did duty at that time—for the older structure. Many people asserted then that the temporary structure was destined to become permanent, because it yielded a comfortable revenue to the officials whose duty it was to keep it in repair; but whether this uncharitable prediction has been realized, I know not.

Those who wish to enjoy the illusions produced by scene-painting and stage-decorations should never go behind the scenes. In like manner he who wishes to preserve the delusion that Russian towns are picturesque should never enter them, but content himself with viewing them from a distance. A walk through the streets inevitably dispels the illusion, and proves satisfactorily that irregularity, even when combined with squalor, is not necessarily picturesque.

However imposing Russian towns may look when seen from the outside, they will generally be found on closer inspection to be little more than villages in disguise. If they have not a positively rustic, they have at least a suburban, appearance. The streets are straight and wide, and are either miserably paved or not paved at all. *Trottoirs* are not considered indispensable. The houses are built of wood or stone, generally one-storied, and separated from each other by spacious yards. Many of them do not condescend to turn their façades to the street. The general impression produced is that the majority of the burghers have come from the

country, and have brought their country houses with them. There are few or no shops with merchandise tastefully arranged in the window to tempt the passer-by. If you wish to make purchases you must go to the Gostinny Dvor,* or Bazaar, which consists of long symmetrical rows of low-roofed, dimly-lighted stores, with a colonnade in front. This is the place where merchants most do congregate, but it presents nothing of that bustle and activity which we are accustomed to associate with commercial life. The shopkeepers stand at their doors or loiter about in the immediate vicinity waiting for customers. From the scarcity of these latter I should say that when sales are effected the profits must be enormous. In the other parts of the town the air of solitude and languor is still more conspicuous. In the great square, or by the side of the promenade—if the town is fortunate enough to have one—cows or horses may be seen grazing tranquilly, without being at all conscious of the incongruity of their position. And, indeed, it would be strange if they had any such consciousness, for it does not exist in the minds either of the police or of the inhabitants. At night the streets are not lighted at all, or are supplied merely with a few oil-lamps, which do little more than render the darkness visible, so that cautious citizens returning home late often arm themselves with lanterns. A few years ago an honorable town-councilor of Moscow opposed a project for lighting the city with gas, and maintained that those who chose to go out at night should carry their lamps with them. The objection was over-ruled, and Moscow was supplied with gas-lamps, but very few of the provincial towns have as yet followed the example of the ancient capital.

This description does not apply to St. Petersburg and Odessa, but these cities may for the present be left out of consideration, for they have a distinctly foreign character. The genuine Russian towns—and Moscow may still almost be included in the number—have a semi-rustic air, or at least the appearance of those retired suburbs of a large city which are still free from the jurisdiction of the municipal authorities.

The scarcity of towns in Russia is not less remarkable than their rustic appearance. I use the word here in the popular and not in

* These words mean literally the Guests' Court or Yard. The Gosti—a word which is etymologically the same as our host and guest—were originally the merchants who traded with other towns or other countries.

the official sense. In official language a town means a collection of houses, containing certain organs of administration, and hence the term is sometimes applied to petty villages. Let us avoid, then, the official list of the towns, and turn to the statistics of population. It may be presumed, I suppose, that no town is worthy of the name unless it contains at least 10,000 inhabitants. Now, if we apply this test, we shall find that in the whole of European Russia in the narrower sense of the term—excluding Finland, the Baltic provinces, Lithuania, Poland, and the Caucasus, which are politically but not socially parts of Russia—there are only 127 towns. Of these, only twenty-five contain more than 25,000, and only eleven contain more than 50,000 inhabitants.*

These facts indicate plainly that in Russia, as compared with Western Europe, the urban element in the population is relatively small; and this conclusion is borne out by statistical data. In Russia the urban element composes only a tenth part of the entire population, whereas in Great Britain more than one-half of the inhabitants are dwellers in towns. A serious effort to discover the causes of this would certainly bring out some striking peculiarities in the past history and present condition of the Russian Empire. I have myself made the attempt, and I propose now to communicate a few results of the investigation.

The chief cause is that Russia is much less densely populated than Western Europe. Towards the East she has never had a natural frontier, but always a wide expanse of fertile, uncultivated land, offering a tempting field for emigration; and the peasantry have ever shown themselves ready to take advantage of their geographical position. Instead of improving their primitive system of agriculture, which requires an enormous area and rapidly exhausts the soil, they have always found it easier and more profitable to emigrate and take possession of the virgin land to the eastward. Thus the territory—sometimes with the aid of, and sometimes in spite of, the Government—has constantly expanded, and has already reached Behring's Straits and the northern offshoots of the Himalayas. The little district around the sources of the Dnieper has grown into a great empire forty times as large

* These are—St. Petersburg, 668,000; Moscow, 602,000; Odessa, 121,000; Kishinéf, 104,000; Sarátov, 93,000; Kazán, 79,000; Kief, 71,000; Nikoláef, 68,000; Khárkof, 60,000; Túla, 58,000; Berditchev, 52,000.

as France, and in all this vast area there are only about eighty millions of inhabitants. Prolific as the Russian race is, its powers of reproduction could not keep pace with its power of territorial expansion, and consequently the country is still very thinly peopled. If we take European Russia as a whole, we find that the population is only about fourteen to the square verst, whilst in Great Britain, for a similar area, the average density is about 114. Even the most densely-populated region—the northern part of the Black-earth zone—has only about forty to the square verst. A people that has such an abundance of land, and can support itself by agriculture, is not likely to devote itself to industry, and not likely to congregate in towns.

The second cause which hindered the formation of towns was serfage. Serfage, and the administrative system of which it formed a part, hemmed the natural movements of the population. The nobles habitually lived on their estates, and taught a portion of their serfs to supply them with nearly everything they required; and the peasants who might desire to settle as artisans in the towns were not free to do so, because they were attached to the soil. Thus arose those curious village industries of which I have already spoken.

The insignificance of the Russian towns is in part explained by these two causes. The abundance of land tended to prevent the development of industry, and the little industry which did exist was prevented by serfage from collecting in the towns. But this explanation is evidently incomplete. The same causes existed during the Middle Ages in Central Europe, and yet, in spite of them, flourishing cities grew up and played an important part in the social and political history of Germany. In these cities collected traders and artisans, forming a distinct social class, distinguished from the nobles on the one hand, and the surrounding peasantry on the other, by peculiar occupations, peculiar aims, peculiar intellectual physiognomy, and peculiar moral code. Now why did these important towns and this burgher class not likewise come into existence in Russia, in spite of the two preventive causes above mentioned?

To discuss this question fully it would be necessary to enter into certain debated points of mediæval history. All I can do here is to indicate what seems to me the true explanation.

In Central Europe, all through the Middle Ages, a perpetual

struggle went on between the various political factors of which society was composed, and the important towns were in a certain sense the product of this struggle. However the towns may have originally come into existence, it is certain that they were preserved and fostered by the mutual rivalry of the Sovereign, the Feudal Nobility, and the Church; and those who desired to live by trade or industry were obliged to settle in them in order to enjoy the protection and immunities which they afforded. In Russia there was never any political struggle of this kind. As soon as the Grand Princes of Moscow, in the sixteenth century, threw off the yoke of the Tartars, and made themselves Tsars of all Russia, their power was irresistible and uncontested. Complete masters of the situation, they organized their country as they thought fit. At first their policy was favorable to the development of the towns. Perceiving that the mercantile and industrial classes might be made a rich source of revenue, they separated them from the peasantry, gave them the exclusive right of trading, prevented the other classes from competing with them, and freed them from the authority of the landed proprietors. Had they carried out this policy in a cautious, rational way, they might have created a rich burgher class; but they acted with true Oriental short-sightedness, and defeated their own purpose. Forgetting the welfare of the governed in their desire to benefit themselves, they imposed inordinately heavy taxes, and treated the urban population as their serfs. The richer merchants were forced to serve as custom-house officers—often at a great distance from their domiciles*—and artisans were yearly summoned to Moscow to do work for the Tsars without remuneration. Besides this, the system of taxation was radically defective, and the members of the local administration who received no pay and were practically free from control, were merciless in their exactions. In a word, the Tsars used their power so awkwardly and so recklessly that the industrial and trading population, instead of fleeing to the towns to secure protection, fled from them to escape oppression. At length this emigration from the towns assumed such dimensions that it was found necessary to prevent it by administrative and legislative measures; and the urban population were legally fixed in the towns as the rural

* Merchants from Yaroslaff, for instance, were sent to Astrakhan to collect the custom-dues.

population were fixed to the soil. Those who fled were brought back as runaways, and those who attempted flight a second time were ordered to be flogged and transported to Siberia.*

At the beginning of last century began a new era in the history of the towns and of the urban population. Peter the Great observed, during his travels in Western Europe, that national wealth and prosperity reposed chiefly on the enterprising, educated middle classes, and he attributed the poverty of his own country to the absence of this burgher element. Might not such a class be created in Russia? Peter unhesitatingly assumed that it might, and set himself at once to create it in a simple, straightforward way. Foreign artisans were imported into his dominions, and foreign merchants were invited to trade with his subjects; young Russians were sent abroad to learn the useful arts; efforts were made to disseminate practical knowledge by the translation of foreign books and the foundation of schools; all kinds of trade were encouraged, and various industrial enterprises were organized. At the same time the administration of the towns was thoroughly re-organized after the model of the ancient free-towns of Germany. In place of the old organization, which was a slightly modified form of the rural Commune, they received German municipal institutions, with burgomasters, town-councils, courts of justice, guilds for the merchants, trade corporations (Tsekhi) for the artisans, and an endless list of instructions regarding the development of trade and industry, the building of hospitals, sanitary precautions, the founding of schools, the dispensation of justice, the organization of the police, and similar matters.

Catherine II. followed in the same track. If she did less for developing trade and industry, she did more in the way of legislating and writing grandiloquent manifestoes. In the course of her historical studies she had learned, as she proclaims in one of her manifestoes, that "from remotest antiquity we everywhere find the memory of town builders elevated to the same level as the memory of legislators, and we see that heroes, famous for their victories, hoped by town building to give immortality to their names." As the securing of immortality for her own name

* See the "Ulozhenie" (*i. e.*, the laws of Alexis, father of Peter the Great), cap. xix., § 13.

was her chief aim in life, she acted in accordance with historical precedent, and created 216 towns in the short space of twenty-three years. This seems a great work, but it did not satisfy her ambition. She was not only a student of history, but at the same time a warm admirer of the fashionable political philosophy of her time. That philosophy paid much attention to the *tiers-état*, which was then acquiring in France great political importance, and Catherine thought that, as she had created a *noblesse* on the French model, she might also create a *bourgeoisie*. For this purpose she modified the municipal organization created by her great predecessor, and granted to all the towns an Imperial Charter. This charter remained without essential modification down to the commencement of the present reign.

These efforts to create a rich, intelligent *tiers-état* have not been attended with much success. Their influence has always been more apparent in official documents than in real life. The great mass of the population remained serfs, fixed to the soil, whilst the nobles—that is to say, all who possessed a little education—were required for the military and civil services. Those who were sent abroad to learn the useful arts learned little, and made little use of the knowledge which they acquired. On their return to their native country they very soon fell victims to the soporific influence of the surrounding social atmosphere. The “town building” had as little practical result. It was an easy matter to create any number of towns in the official sense of the term. To transform a village into a town, it was necessary merely to prepare an *izbá*, or log-house, for the district court, another for the police-office, a third for the prison, and so on. On an appointed day a Government official arrived from the provincial capital, collected the officials destined to serve in the newly-constructed or newly-arranged log-houses, ordered a simple religious ceremony to be performed by the priest, caused a formal act to be written, and then declared the town to be “opened.” All this required very little creative effort, but it was not so easy to create a spirit of commercial and industrial enterprise among the population. That could not be effected by Imperial ukaz.

To animate the newly-imported municipal institutions, which had no root in the traditions and habits of the people, was a task of equal difficulty. In the West these institutions had been slowly devised in the course of centuries to meet real, keenly-felt,

practical wants. In Russia they were adopted for the purpose of creating those wants which were not yet felt. Let the reader imagine our Board of Trade supplying the masters of fishing-smacks with accurate charts, learned treatises on navigation, and detailed instructions for the proper ventilation of ships' cabins, and he will have some idea of the effect which Peter's legislation had upon the towns. The office-bearers, elected against their will, were hopelessly bewildered by the complicated procedure, and were incapable of understanding the numerous ukazes, prescribing to them their multifarious duties, and threatening the most merciless punishments for sins of omission and commission. Soon, however, it was discovered that the threats were not nearly so dreadful as they seemed; and accordingly those municipal authorities, who were to protect and enlighten the burghers, "forgot the fear of God and the Tsar," and extorted so unblushingly, that it was found necessary to place them under the control of Government officials.

The chief practical result of the efforts made by Peter and Catherine to create a *bourgeoisie* was that the inhabitants of the towns were more systematically arranged in categories for the purpose of taxation, and that the taxes were increased. All those parts of the new administration which had no direct relation to the fiscal interests of the Government had no inherent life or spontaneous activity. The truth is that the whole system had been arbitrarily imposed on the people, and had no motive power except the Imperial will. Had that motive power been withdrawn, and the burghers left to regulate their own municipal affairs, the system would immediately have collapsed. Rathhaus, burgomasters, guilds, aldermen, and all the other lifeless shadows which had been called into existence by Imperial ukaz, would instantly have vanished into space. In this fact we have one of the characteristic traits of Russian historical development compared with that of Western Europe. In the West, monarchy had to struggle with municipal institutions to prevent them from becoming too powerful; in Russia, it had to struggle with them to prevent them from committing suicide or dying of inanition.

According to Catherine's legislation, which remained in full force down to the present reign, and still exists in its main features, towns are of three kinds: (1) "Government towns" (*gubernskie gorodá*)—that is to say, the chief towns of provinces,

or "Governments" (*gubernii*)—in which are concentrated the various organs of provincial administration; (2) District towns (*uyezdnie gorodá*), in which resides the administration of the districts (*uyezdi*) into which the provinces are divided; and (3) Supernumerary towns (*zashtatnie gorodá*), which have no particular significance in the territorial administration.

In all these the municipal organization is the same. Leaving out of consideration those persons who happen to reside in the towns but in reality belong to the noblesse, the clergy, or the lower ranks of officials, we may say that the town population is composed of three groups: the merchants (*kuptsi*), the burghers in the narrower sense of the term (*meshtchanye*), and the artisans (*tsekhoviye*). Those categories are not hereditary castes, like the nobles, the clergy, and the peasantry. A noble may become a merchant, or a man may be one year a burgher, the next year an artisan, and the third year a merchant, if he changes his occupation and pays the necessary dues. But the categories form, for the time being, distinct corporations, each possessing a peculiar organization and peculiar privileges and obligations.

Of these three groups the first in the scale of dignity is that of the merchants. It is chiefly recruited from the burghers and the peasantry. Any one who wishes to engage in commerce inscribes himself in one of the three guilds, according to the amount of his capital and the nature of the operations in which he wishes to embark, and as soon as he has paid the required dues, he becomes officially a merchant. As soon as he ceases to pay these dues he ceases to be a merchant in the legal sense of the term, and returns to the class to which he formerly belonged. There are some families whose members have belonged to the merchant class for several generations, and the law speaks about a certain "velvet-book" (*barkhatnaya kniga*) in which their names should be inscribed, but in reality they do not form a distinct category, and they descend at once from their privileged position as soon as they cease to pay the annual guild dues.

The artisans form the connecting link between the town population and the peasantry, for peasants often enroll themselves in the trades corporations, or *Tsekhi*, without severing their connection with the rural communes to which they belong. Each trade or handicraft constitutes a *Tsekh*, at the head of which stands an elder and two assistants, elected by the members; and

all the Tsekhi together form a corporation under an elected head (Remeslenny Golová), assisted by a council composed of the elders of the various Tsekhi. It is the duty of this council and its president to regulate all matters connected with the Tsekhi, and to see that the multifarious regulations regarding masters, journeymen, and apprentices are duly observed.

The nondescript class, composed of those who are inscribed as permanent inhabitants of the towns but who do not belong to any guild or Tsekhi, constitutes what is called the burghers in the narrower sense of the term. Like the other two categories, they form a separate corporation with an elder and an administrative bureau.

Some idea of the relative numerical strength of these three categories may be obtained from the following figures. In European Russia the merchant class (including wives and children) numbers about 466,000, the burghers about 4,033,000, and the artisans about 260,000.

The link of connection between these three categories is the Town Council (Gorodskaya Dûma), the central and highest organ of the municipal administration, with its president the Mayor (Gorodskoi Golová). A few years ago this body was thoroughly re-organized according to the most recent theories of municipal administration; and now all house-proprietors, to whatever class they belong, may take part in its proceedings, and serve as its office-bearers. The consequence of this has been that many towns have now a noble as mayor, but it cannot be said that the spirit of the institution has radically changed. Very few seek election, and those who are elected display very little zeal in the discharge of their duties. Not long ago it was proposed, in the Town Council of St. Petersburg, to insure the presence of a quorum by imposing fines for non-attendance! This fact speaks volumes for the low vitality of these institutions. When such an incident occurs in the capital, we can readily imagine what takes place in the provincial towns.

The development of trade and industry has, of course, enriched the mercantile classes, but it has not affected deeply their mode of life. Of all classes in the empire, they are the most conservative. When a Russian merchant becomes rich, he builds for himself a fine house, or buys and thoroughly repairs the house of some ruined noble, and spends money freely on inlaid floors, gigantic mirrors, malachite tables, grand pianos by the best makers, and

other articles of furniture made of the most costly materials. Occasionally—especially on the occasion of a marriage or a death in the family—he will give magnificent banquets, and expend enormous sums on gigantic sterlets, choice sturgeons, foreign fruits, champagne, and all manner of costly delicacies. But all this lavish, ostentatious expenditure does not affect the ordinary current of his daily life. As you enter those gaudily-furnished rooms you can perceive at a glance that they are not for ordinary use. You notice a rigid symmetry and an indescribable bareness which inevitably suggest that the original arrangements of the upholsterer have never been modified or supplemented. The truth is that by far the greater part of the house is used only on state occasions. The host and his family live down-stairs in small, dirty rooms, furnished in a very different, and for them more comfortable, style. At ordinary times the fine rooms are closed, and the fine furniture carefully covered. If you make a *visite de politesse* after an entertainment at which you have been present, you will probably have some difficulty in gaining admission by the front door. When you have knocked or rung several times, some one will probably come round from the back regions and ask you what you want. Then follows another long pause, and at last footsteps are heard approaching from within. The bolts are drawn, the door is opened, and you are led up to a spacious drawing-room. At the wall opposite the windows there is sure to be a sofa, and before it an oval table. At each end of the table, and at right angles to the sofa, there will be a row of three arm-chairs. The other chairs will be symmetrically arranged round the room. In a few minutes the host will appear, in his long double-breasted black coat and well-polished long boots. His hair is parted in the middle, and his beard shows no trace of scissors or razor. After the customary greetings have been exchanged, glasses of tea, with slices of lemon and preserves, or perhaps a bottle of champagne, are brought in by way of refreshment. The female members of the family you must not expect to see, unless you are an intimate friend; for the merchants still retain something of that female seclusion which was in vogue among the upper classes before the time of Peter the Great. The host himself will probably be an intelligent but totally uneducated and decidedly taciturn man. About the weather and the crops he may talk fluently enough, but he will not show much inclination to go beyond these topics.

You may perhaps desire to converse with him on the subject with which he is best acquainted—the trade in which he is himself engaged ; but if you make the attempt you will certainly not gain much information, and you may possibly meet with such an incident as once happened to my traveling companion, a Russian gentleman, who had been commissioned by two learned societies to collect information regarding the grain trade. When he called on a merchant who had promised to assist him in his investigations, he was hospitably received, but when he began to speak about the grain trade of the district, the merchant suddenly interrupted him, and proposed to tell him a story. The story was as follows :—

Once on a time a rich landed proprietor had a son, who was a thoroughly spoilt child ; and one day the boy said to his father that he wished all the young serfs to come and sing before the door of the house. After some attempts at dissuasion the request was granted, and the young people assembled ; but as soon as they began to sing, the boy rushed out and drove them away.

When the merchant had told this apparently pointless story at great length, and with much circumstantial detail, he paused a little, poured some tea into his saucer, drank it off, and then inquired—“ Now what do you think was the reason of this strange conduct ? ”

My friend replied that the riddle surpassed his powers of divination.

“ Well,” said the merchant, looking hard at him with a knowing grin, “ there was no reason ; and all the boy could say was, ‘ Go away, go away ! I’ve changed my mind ; I’ve changed my mind ! ’ ” (*poshli von ; otkhotyél*).

There was no possibility of mistaking the point of the story. My friend took the hint and departed.

The Russian merchant’s love of ostentation is of a peculiar kind—something entirely different from English snobbery and American shoddyism. He may delight in gaudy reception-rooms, magnificent dinners, fast trotters, costly furs ; or he may display his riches by princely donations to churches, monasteries, or benevolent institutions : but in all this he never affects to be other than he really is. He habitually wears a costume which designates plainly his social position, makes no attempt to adopt fine manners or elegant tastes, and never seeks to gain admission to what is

called in Russia *la société*. Having no desire to seem what he is not, he has a plain, unaffected manner, and sometimes a certain quiet dignity, which contrasts favorably with the affected manner of those nobles of the lower ranks who make pretensions to being highly educated, and strive to adopt the outward forms of French culture. At his great dinners, it is true, the merchant likes to see among his guests as many "generals"—that is to say, official personages—as possible, and especially those who happen to have a *grand cordon*; but he never dreams of thereby establishing an intimacy with these personages, or of being invited by them in return. It is perfectly understood by both parties that nothing of the kind is meant. The invitation is given and accepted from quite different motives. The merchant has the satisfaction of seeing at his table men of high official rank, and feels that the consideration which he enjoys among people of his own class is thereby augmented. If he succeeds in obtaining the presence of three generals, he obtains a victory over a rival who cannot obtain more than two. The general, on his side, gets a first-rate dinner, and acquires, in return for the honor he has conferred, a certain undefined right to request subscriptions for public objects or benevolent institutions.

Of course this undefined right is commonly nothing more than a mere tacit understanding, but in certain cases the subject is expressly mentioned. I know of one case in which a regular bargain was made. A Moscow magnate was invited by a merchant to a dinner, and consented to go in full uniform, with all his decorations, on condition that the merchant should subscribe a certain sum to a benevolent institution in which he was particularly interested. It is whispered that such bargains are sometimes made not on behalf of benevolent institutions, but simply in the interest of the gentleman who accepts the invitation. I cannot believe that there are many official personages who would consent to let themselves out as table decorations, but that it may happen is proved by the following incident, which accidentally came to my knowledge. A rich merchant of the town of T—once requested the Governor of the Province to honor a family festivity with his presence, and added that he would consider it a special favor if the "Governoress" would enter an appearance. To this latter request His Excellency made many objections, and at last let the petitioner understand that Her Excellency could

not possibly be present, because she had no velvet dress that could bear comparison with those of several merchants' wives who would be present. Two days after the interview a piece of the finest velvet that could be procured in Moscow was received by the Governor, from an unknown donor, and his wife was thus enabled to be present at the festivity, to the complete satisfaction of all parties concerned.

It is worthy of remark that the merchants recognize no aristocracy but that of official rank. Many merchants would willingly give twenty pounds for the presence of an "actual State-Councillor," who, perhaps, never heard of his grandfather, but who can show a *grand cordon*, whilst they would not give twenty pence for the presence of an undecorated Prince who has no official rank, though he can trace his pedigree up to the half-mythical Rurik. Of the latter they would probably say, "*Kto ikh znaet?*"—who knows what sort of a fellow he is? The former, on the contrary, whoever his father and grandfather may have been, possesses unmistakable marks of the Tsar's favor, which, in the merchant's opinion, is infinitely more important than any rights or pretensions founded on hereditary titles or long pedigrees.

These marks of Imperial favor the merchants strive to obtain for themselves. They do not dream of *grands cordons*—that is far beyond their most sanguine expectations—but they do all in their power to obtain those lesser decorations which are granted to the mercantile class. For this purpose the most common expedient is a liberal subscription to some benevolent institution, and sometimes a regular bargain is made. I know at least of one instance where the kind of decoration was expressly stipulated. The affair illustrates so well the commercial character of these transactions, that I venture to state the facts as related to me by the official chiefly concerned. A merchant subscribed to a society, which enjoyed the patronage of a Grand Duchess, a considerable sum of money, under the express condition that he should receive in return a St. Vladimir Cross. Instead of the desired decoration, which was considered too much for the sum subscribed, a cross of St. Stanislas was granted; but the donor was dissatisfied with the latter, and demanded that his money should be returned to him. The demand had to be complied with, and, as an Imperial gift cannot be retracted, the merchant had his Stanislas Cross for nothing.

This traffic in decorations has had its natural result. Like

paper-money issued in too large quantities, the decorations have fallen in value. The gold medals which were formerly much coveted and worn with pride—suspended by a ribbon round the neck—are now little desired. In like manner the inordinate respect for official personages has considerably diminished. Twenty years ago the provincial merchants vied with each other in their desire to entertain any great dignitary who honored their town with a visit, but now they seek rather to avoid this expensive and barren honor. When, however, they do accept the honor, they fulfill the duties of hospitality in a most liberal spirit. When living in a merchant's house in company with an official personage, I have sometimes found it difficult to obtain anything simpler than sterlet, sturgeon, and champagne.

The two great blemishes on the character of the Russian merchants as a class are, according to general opinion, their ignorance and their dishonesty. As to the former of these there cannot possibly be any difference of opinion. The great majority of the merchants do not possess even the rudiments of education. Many of them can neither read nor write, and are forced to keep their accounts in their memory, or by means of ingenious hieroglyphics, intelligible only to the inventor. Others can decipher the calendar and the lives of the saints, can sign their names with tolerable facility, and can make the simpler arithmetical calculations with the help of a little calculating instrument called "*stchety*," which resembles the "*abaca*" of the old Romans, and is universally used in Russia. It is only the minority who understand the mysteries of regular book-keeping, and of these very few can make any pretensions to being educated men. Already, however, symptoms of a change for the better in this respect are noticeable. Some of the rich merchants are now giving to their children the best education which can be procured, and already a few young merchants may be found who can speak one or two foreign languages and may fairly be called educated men. Unfortunately, many of these forsake the occupations of their forefathers and seek distinction elsewhere. In this way the mercantile class constantly loses a considerable portion of that valuable leaven which may ultimately leaven the whole lump.

As to the dishonesty which is said to be so common among the Russian commercial classes, it is difficult to form an accurate judgment. That an enormous amount of unfair dealing does

exist there can be no possible doubt, but it must be admitted that in this matter a foreigner is likely to be unduly severe. We are apt to apply unflinchingly our own standard of commercial morality, and to forget that trade in Russia is only emerging from that primitive condition in which fixed prices and moderate profits are entirely unknown. And when we happen to detect positive dishonesty, it seems to us especially heinous, because the trickery employed is more primitive and awkward than that to which we are accustomed. Trickery in weighing and measuring, for instance, which is by no means uncommon in Russia, is likely to make us more indignant than those ingenious methods of adulteration which are practiced nearer home, and are regarded by many as almost legitimate. Beside this, foreigners who go to Russia and embark in speculations without possessing any adequate knowledge of the character, customs, and language of the people, positively invite spoliation, and ought to blame themselves rather than the people who profit by their ignorance and inexperience. All this, and much more of the same kind, may be fairly urged in mitigation of the severe judgments which foreign merchants commonly pass on Russian commercial morality, but these judgments cannot be reversed by such argumentation. The dishonesty and rascality which exist among the merchants are fully recognized by the Russians themselves. In all moral affairs the lower classes in Russia are very lenient in their judgments, and are strongly disposed, like the Americans, to admire what is called in Transatlantic phraseology "a smart man," though the smartness is known to contain a large admixture of dishonesty; and yet the *vox populi* in Russia emphatically declares that the merchants as a class are unscrupulous and dishonest. There is a rude popular play, in which the Devil, as principal *dramatis persona*, succeeds in cheating all manner and conditions of men, but is finally over-reached by a genuine Russian merchant. When this play is acted in the Carnival Theater in St. Petersburg, the audience invariably agree with the moral of the plot.

If this play were acted in the southern towns near the coast of the Black Sea it would be necessary to modify it considerably, for here, in company with Jews, Greeks, and Armenians, the Russian merchants seem honest by comparison. As to Greeks and Armenians, I know not which of the two nationalities deserves the palm, but it seems that both are surpassed by the Children of.

Israel. "How these Jews do business," I have heard a Russian merchant of this region exclaim, "I cannot understand. They buy up wheat in the villages at eleven roubles per Tchetvert, transport it to the coast at their own expense, and sell it to the exporters at ten roubles ! And yet they contrive to make a profit ! It is said that the Russian trader is cunning, but here 'our brother' (*i. e.*, the Russian) can do nothing." The truth of this statement I have had abundant opportunities of confirming.

If I might express a general opinion regarding Russian commercial morality, I should say that trade in Russia is carried on very much on the same principle as horse-dealing in England. A man who wishes to buy or sell must trust to his own knowledge and acuteness, and if he gets the worst of a bargain or lets himself be deceived, he has himself to blame. Commercial Englishmen on arriving in Russia rarely understand this, and when they know it theoretically, they are too often unable, from their ignorance of the language, the laws, and the customs of the people, to turn their theoretical knowledge to account. They indulge, therefore, at first in endless invectives against the prevailing dishonesty ; but gradually, when they have paid what Germans call *Lehrgeld*, they accommodate themselves to circumstances, take large profits to counterbalance bad debts, and generally succeed—if they have sufficient energy, mother-wit, and capital—in making a very handsome income. The old race of British merchants, however, is rapidly dying out, and I greatly fear that the rising generation will not be equally successful. Times have changed. It is no longer possible to amass large fortunes in the old easy-going fashion. Every year the conditions alter, and the competition increases. In order to foresee, understand, and take advantage of the changes, one must have far more knowledge of the country than the men of the old school possessed, and it seems to me that the young generation have still less of this knowledge than their predecessors. Unless some change takes place in this respect, the German merchants, who have generally a much better commercial education and are much better acquainted with their adopted country, will ultimately, I believe, expel their British rivals. Already, it is said, many branches of commerce formerly carried on by Englishmen have passed into their hands.

It must not be supposed that the unsatisfactory organization of the Russian commercial world is the result of any radical peculi-

arity of the Russian character. All new countries have to pass through a similar state of things, and in Russia there are already premonitory symptoms of a change for the better. For the present, it is true, the extensive construction of railways and the rapid development of banks and limited liability companies have opened up a new and wide field for all kinds of commercial swindling; but, on the other hand, there are now in every large town a certain number of merchants who carry on business in the West-European manner, and have learnt by experience that honesty is the best policy. The success which many of these have obtained will doubtless cause their example to be followed. The old spirit of caste and routine which has long animated the merchant class is rapidly disappearing, and not a few nobles are now exchanging country life and the service of the State for industrial and commercial enterprises. In this way is being formed the nucleus of that wealthy, enlightened bourgeoisie, which Catherine endeavored to create by legislation, but many years must elapse before this class acquires sufficient social and political significance to deserve the title of a *tiers-état*. We have here an interesting subject for speculation, but I have already wandered too far from my starting-point. Let us return, therefore, at once to Novgorod.

CHAPTER XII.

LORD NOVGOROD THE GREAT.

The Eastern Half of the Town—The Kremlin—An Old Legend—The Armed Men of Rūs—The Northmen—Popular Liberty in Novgorod—The Prince and the Popular Assembly—Civil Dissensions and Faction-fights—The Commercial Republic conquered by the Muscovite Tsars—Ivan the Terrible—Present Condition of the Town—Provincial Society—Card-playing—Periodicals—"Eternal Stillness."

THAT part of Novgorod which lies on the eastern bank of the river contains nothing that is worthy of special attention. As is the case in most Russian towns, the streets are straight, wide, and ill-paved, and all run parallel or at right angles to each other. At the end of the bridge is a spacious market-place, flanked on one side by the Town-house. Near the other side stand the houses of the Governor and of the chief military authority of the district. The only other buildings of note are the numerous churches, which are mostly small, and offer nothing that is likely to interest the student of architecture. Altogether this part of the town is eminently unpicturesque and thoroughly uninteresting. The learned archæologist may detect in it some traces of the distant past, but the ordinary traveler will find little to arrest his attention.

If now we cross over by the bridge to the other side of the river, we at once find before us something which very few Russian towns possess—a kremlin, or citadel. This is a large and slightly-elevated inclosure, surrounded by high brick walls, and in part by the remains of a moat. Before the days of heavy artillery these walls must have presented a formidable barrier to any besieging force, but they have long ceased to have any military significance, and are now nothing more than an historical monument. Passing through the gateway which faces the bridge, we find ourselves in a large open space. To the right stands the cathedral—a small,

much-venerated church, which can make no pretensions to architectural beauty—and an irregular group of buildings containing the consistory and the residence of the Archbishop. To the left is a long symmetrical range of buildings containing the Government offices and the law courts. Midway between this and the cathedral, in the center of the great open space, stands a colossal monument, composed of a massive circular stone pedestal and an enormous globe, on and around which cluster a number of emblematic and historical figures. This curious monument, which has at least the merit of being original in design, was erected in 1862, in commemoration of Russia's thousandth birth-day, and is supposed to represent the history of Russia in general and of Novgorod in particular during the last thousand years. It was placed here because Novgorod is the oldest of Russian towns, and because somewhere in the surrounding country occurred the incident which is commonly recognized as the foundation of the Russian Empire. The incident in question is thus described in the oldest chronicle:—

“At that time, as the southern Slavonians paid tribute to the Kozars, so the Novgorodian Slavonians suffered from the attacks of the Variags. For some time the Variags extracted tribute from the Novgorodian Slavonians and the neighboring Finns; then the conquered tribes, by uniting their forces, drove out the foreigners. But among the Slavonians arose strong internal dissensions; the clans rose against each other. Then, for the creation of order and safety, they resolved to call in princes from a foreign land. In the year 862 Slavonic legates went away beyond the sea to the Variag tribe called Rūs, and said, ‘Our land is great and fruitful, but there is no order in it; come and reign and rule over us.’ Three brothers accepted this invitation, and appeared with their armed followers. The eldest of these, Rurik, settled in Novgorod; the second, Sineus, at Byelo-ozero; and the third, Truvor, in Isborsk. From them our land is called Rūs. After two years the brothers of Rurik died. He alone began to rule over the Novgorod district, and confided to his men the administration of the principal towns.”

This simple legend has given rise to a vast amount of learned controversy, and historical investigators have fought valiantly with each other about the important question, Who were those armed men of Rūs? For a long time the commonly received opinion was that they were Normans from Scandinavia. The

Slavophiles accepted the legend literally in this sense, and constructed upon it an ingenious theory of Russian history. The nations of the West, they said, were conquered by invaders, who seized the country, and created the feudal system for their own benefit; hence the history of Western Europe is a long tale of bloody struggles between conquerors and conquered, and at the present day the old enmity still lives in the political rivalry of the different social classes. The Russo-Slavonians, on the contrary, were not conquered, but voluntarily invited a foreign prince to come and rule over them; hence the whole social and political development of Russia has been essentially peaceful, and the Russian people know nothing of social castes or feudalism. Though this theory afforded some nourishment for patriotic self-satisfaction, it displeased extreme patriots, who did not like the idea that order was first established in their country by men of Teutonic race. These preferred to adopt the theory that Rurik and his companions were Slavonians from the shores of the Baltic. At the present time the general tendency seems to be to regard the story as a childish invention of the monkish chroniclers.

Though I have myself devoted to the study of this question more time and labor than perhaps the subject deserves, I have no intention of inviting the reader to follow me through the tedious controversy. Suffice it to say that, after careful consideration, and with all due deference to recent historians, I am inclined to adopt the old theory, and to regard the Normans of Scandinavia as in a certain sense the founders of the Russian Empire. We know from other sources that during the ninth century there was a great exodus from Scandinavia. Greedy of booty, and fired with the spirit of adventure, the Northmen, in their light open boats, swept along the coasts of Germany, France, Spain, Greece, and Asia Minor, pillaging the towns and villages near the sea, and entering into the heart of the country by means of the rivers. At first they were mere marauders, and showed everywhere such ferocity and cruelty, that they came to be regarded as something akin to plagues and famines, and the faithful added a new petition to one of the prayers in the Litany, "From the wrath and malice of the Normans, O Lord, deliver us!" But towards the middle of the century the movement changed its character. The raids became military invasions, and the invaders sought to conquer the lands which they had formerly plundered, "*ut acquirant sibi*

spoliando regna quibus possent vivere pace perpetua." The chiefs embraced Christianity, married the daughters or sisters of the reigning princes, and obtained the conquered territories as feudal grants. Thus arose Norman principalities in the Low Countries, in France, in Italy, and in Sicily; and the Northmen, rapidly blending with the native population, soon showed as much political talent as they had formerly shown reckless and destructive valor.

It would have been strange indeed if these adventurers, who succeeded in reaching Asia Minor and the coasts of North America, should have overlooked Russia, which lay, as it were, at their very doors. The Volkhof, flowing through Novgorod, forms part of a great water-way, which affords almost uninterrupted water-communication between the Baltic and the Black Sea, and we know that some time afterwards the Scandinavians used this route in their journeys to Constantinople. The change which the Scandinavian movement underwent elsewhere is clearly indicated by the Russian chronicles: first, the Variags came as collectors of tribute, and raised so much popular opposition that they were expelled, and then they came as rulers, and settled in the country. Whether they really came on invitation may be doubted, but that they adopted the language, religion, and customs of their adopted country does not militate against the assertion that they were Normans. On the contrary, we have here rather an additional confirmation, for elsewhere the Normans did likewise. In the north of France they adopted almost at once the French language and religion, and the son and successor of the famous Rollo was sometimes reproached with being more French than Norman.*

Though it is difficult to decide how far the legend is literally true, there can be no possible doubt that the event which it more or less accurately describes had an important influence on Russian history. From that time dates the rapid expansion of the Russo-Slavonians—a movement that is still going on at the present day. To the north, the east, and the south, new principalities were formed and governed by men who all claimed to be descendants of Rurik, and down to the end of the sixteenth century no one outside of this great family ever attempted to establish independent sovereignty in Russia.

* Strinnholm, "Die Vikingerzüge" (Hamburg, 1839), I., p. 135.

For six centuries after the so-called invitation of Rurik the city on the Volkhof had a strange checkered history. Rapidly it conquered the neighboring Finnish tribes, and grew into a powerful independent state, with a territory extending to the Gulf of Finland, and northwards to the White Sea. At the same time its commercial importance increased, and it became an outpost of the Hanseatic League. In this work the descendants of Rurik played an important part, but they were always kept in strict subordination to the popular will. Political freedom kept pace with commercial prosperity. What means Rurik employed for establishing and preserving order we know not, but we know that his successors in Novgorod possessed merely such authority as was freely granted them by the people. The supreme power resided not in the prince, but in the assembly of the citizens called together in the market-place by the sound of the great bell. This assembly made laws for the prince as well as for the people, entered into alliances with foreign powers, declared war and concluded peace, imposed taxes, raised troops, and not only elected the magistrates, but also judged and deposed them when it thought fit. The prince was little more than the hired commander of the troops and the president of the judicial administration. When entering on his functions, he had to take a solemn oath that he would faithfully observe the ancient laws and usages, and if he failed to fulfill his promise, he was sure to be summarily deposed and expelled. The people had an old rhymed proverb, "*Koli khud knyaz, tak v gryaz!*" ("If the prince is bad, into the mud with him!"), and they habitually acted according to it. So unpleasant, indeed, was the task of ruling those sturdy, stiff-necked burghers, that some princes refused to undertake it, and others, having tried it for a time, voluntarily laid down their authority and departed. But these frequent depositions and abdications—as many as thirty took place in the course of a single century—did not permanently disturb the existing order of things. The descendants of Rurik were numerous, and there were always plenty of candidates for the vacant place. The municipal republic continued to grow in strength and in riches, and during the thirteenth and fourteenth century it proudly styled itself "Lord Novgorod the Great" (*Gospodin Veliki Novgorod*).

"Then came a change, as all things human change." To the east arose the principality of Moscow—not an old, rich municipal

republic, but a young, vigorous State, ruled by a line of crafty, energetic, ambitious, and unscrupulous princes, who were freeing the country from the Tartar yoke and gradually annexing by fair means and foul the neighboring principalities to their own dominions. At the same time, and in a similar manner, the Lithuanian princes to the westward united various small principalities, and formed a powerful independent State. Thus Novgorod found itself between two powerful aggressive neighbors. Under a strong Government it might have held its own against these rivals and successfully maintained its independence, but its strength was already undermined by internal dissensions. Political liberty had led to anarchy. Again and again on that great open space where the national monument now stands, and in the market-place on the other side of the river, scenes of disorder and bloodshed took place, and more than once on the bridge battles were fought by contending factions. Sometimes it was a contest between rival families, and sometimes a struggle between the municipal aristocracy, who sought to monopolize the political power, and the common people, who wished to have a large share in the administration. A State thus divided against itself could not long resist the aggressive tendencies of powerful neighbors. Artful diplomacy could but postpone the evil day, and it required no great political foresight to predict that sooner or later Novgorod must become Lithuanian or Muscovite. The great families inclined to Lithuania, but the popular party and the clergy looked to Moscow for assistance, and the Grand Princes of Muscovy ultimately gained the prize.

The barbarous way in which the Grand Princes effected the annexation shows how thoroughly they had imbibed the spirit of Tartar statesmanship. Thousands of families were transported to Moscow, and Muscovite families put in their place; and when, in spite of this, the old spirit revived, Ivan the Terrible determined to apply the method of physical extermination, which he had found so effectual in breaking the power of his own nobles. Advancing with a large army, which met with no resistance, he devastated the country with fire and sword, and during a residence of five weeks in the town, he put the inhabitants to death with a ruthless ferocity which has perhaps never been surpassed even by Oriental despots. If these old walls could speak they would have many a horrible tale to tell. Enough has been pre-

served in the chronicles to give us some idea of this awful time. Monks and priests were subjected to the Tartar punishment called *pravezh*, which consisted in tying the victim to a stake, and flogging him daily until a certain sum of money was paid for his release. The merchants and officials were tortured with fire, and then thrown from the bridge with their wives and children into the river. Lest any of them should escape by swimming, boat-fuls of soldiers dispatched those who were not killed by the fall. At the present day there is a curious bubbling immediately below the bridge, which prevents the water from freezing in winter, and according to popular belief this is caused by the spirits of those who perished at that time. Of those who were murdered in the villages there is no record, but in the town alone no less than 60,000 human beings are said to have been butchered—an awful hecatomb on the altar of national unity and autocratic power! *

This tragic scene, which occurred in 1570, closes the history of Novgorod as an independent State. Its real independence had long since ceased to exist, and now the last spark of the old spirit was extinguished. The Tsars could not suffer even a shadow of political independence to exist within their dominions. The proud municipal republic sunk to the level of the ordinary provincial towns, and since that time it has never shown any symptoms of recovering its ancient commercial prosperity.

In the old days, when many Hanseatic merchants annually visited the city, and when the market-place, the bridge, and the kremlin were often the scene of violent political struggles, Novgorod must have been an interesting place to live in; but now its glory has departed, and in respect of social resources it is not even a first-rate provincial town. Kief, Kazan, and other towns which are situated at a great distance from the capital in districts fertile enough to induce the nobles to farm their own land, are in their way little semi-independent centers of civilization. They contain a theater, a library, two or three clubs, and many large houses belonging to rich landed proprietors, who spend the summer on their estates and come into town for the winter months. These proprietors, together with the resident officials, form a numerous

* Those who care to know more about Ivan the Terrible and his predecessors may consult Mr. Ralston's admirable little work, "Early Russian History," London, 1874.

society, and during the winter, dinner-parties, balls, and other social gatherings are by no means unfrequent. In Novgorod the society is much more limited. It does not, like Kazan, Kief, and Kharkof, possess a university, and it contains no houses belonging to wealthy nobles. The few proprietors of the province who live on their estates, and are rich enough to spend part of the year in town, prefer St. Petersburg for their winter residence. The society, therefore, is composed exclusively of officials and of the officers who happen to be quartered in the town or the immediate vicinity. Of all the people whose acquaintance I made I can recall only two men who did not occupy some official position, civil or military. One of these was a retired doctor, who was attempting to farm on scientific principles, and who, I believe, soon afterwards gave up the attempt and emigrated elsewhere. The other was a Polish bishop, who had been compromised in the insurrection of 1863, and was condemned to live here under police supervision. This latter could scarcely be said to belong to the society of the place; though he sometimes appeared at the unceremonious weekly receptions given by the Governor, and was invariably treated by all present with marked respect, he could not but feel that he was in a false position, and he was rarely or never seen in other houses.

The society of a town like Novgorod is sure to contain a good many people of average education and agreeable manners, but it is sure to be neither brilliant nor interesting. Though it is constantly undergoing a gradual renovation by the received system of frequently transferring officials from one town to another, it preserves faithfully, in spite of the new blood which it thus receives, its essentially languid character. When a new official arrives he exchanges visits with all the notables, and for a few days he produces quite a sensation in the little community. If he appears at social gatherings he is much talked to, and if he does not appear he is much talked about. His former history is repeatedly narrated, and his various merits and defects assiduously discussed. If he is married, and has brought his wife with him, the field of comment and discussion is very much enlarged. The first time that madame appears in society she is "the cynosure of neighboring eyes." Her features, her complexion, her hair, her dress, and her jewelry are carefully noted and criticised. Perhaps she has brought with her, from the capital or from abroad, some dresses

of the newest fashion. As soon as this is discovered she at once becomes an object of special curiosity to all the ladies, and of envious jealousy to those who regard as a personal grievance the presence of a toilet finer or more fashionable than their own. Her demeanor, too, is very carefully observed. If she is friendly and affable in manner, she is patronized; if she is distant and reserved, she is condemned as proud and pretentious. In either case she is pretty sure to form a close intimacy with some one of the older female residents, and for a few weeks the two ladies are inseparable, till some incautious word or act disturbs the newborn friendship, and the devoted friends become bitter enemies. Voluntarily or involuntarily the husbands get mixed up in the quarrel. Highly undesirable qualities are discovered in the characters of all parties concerned, and are made the subject of unfriendly comment. Then the feud subsides, and some new feud of a similar kind comes to occupy the public attention. Mrs. A. wonders how her friends Mr. and Mrs. B. can afford to lose considerable sums every evening at cards, and suspects that they are getting into debt or starving themselves and their children; in her humble opinion they would do well to give fewer supper-parties, and to refrain from poisoning their guests. The bosom friend to whom this is related retails it directly or indirectly to Mrs. B., and Mrs. B. naturally retaliates. Here is a new quarrel, which for some time affords material for conversation. When there is no quarrel there is sure to be a bit of scandal afloat. Though Russian provincial society is not at all prude, and leans rather to the side of extreme leniency, it cannot entirely overlook *les convenances*. Madame C. has always a large number of male admirers, and to this there can be no reasonable objection so long as her husband does not complain, but really she parades her preference for Mr. X. at balls and parties a little too conspicuously. Then there is Madame D., with the big dreamy eyes. How can she remain in the place after her husband was killed in a duel by a brother officer? Ostensibly the cause of the quarrel was a trifling incident at the card-table, but every one knows that in reality she was the cause of the deadly encounter. And so on, and so on. In the absence of graver interests society naturally bestows inordinate attention on the private affairs of its members; and quarrelling, backbiting and scandal-mongery help indolent people to kill the time that hangs heavily on their hands.

Potent as these instruments are, they are not sufficient to kill all the leisure hours. In the forenoons the gentlemen are occupied with their official duties, whilst the ladies go out shopping or pay visits, and devote any time that remains to their household duties and their children ; but the day's work is over about four o'clock, and the long evening remains to be filled up. The after-dinner siesta may dispose of an hour or an hour and a half, but about seven o'clock some definite occupation has to be found. As it is impossible to devote the whole evening to discussing the ordinary news of the day, recourse is almost invariably had to card-playing, which is indulged in to an extent that we have no conception of in Western Europe. Hour after hour the Russians of both sexes will sit in a hot room, filled with a constantly-renewed cloud of tobacco-smoke—in the production of which some of the ladies perhaps take part—and silently play “Préférence” or “Yarolash.” Those who for some reason are obliged to be alone can amuse themselves with “Patience,” an ingenious game in which no partner is required. In the two former games the stakes are commonly very small, but the sittings are often continued so long that a player may win or lose two or three pounds sterling. It is no unusual thing for gentlemen to play for eight or nine hours at a time. At the weekly club dinners, before coffee had been served, nearly all present used to rush off impatiently to the card-room, and sit there placidly from five o'clock in the afternoon till one or two o'clock in the morning ! When I asked my friends why they devoted so much time to this unprofitable occupation, they always gave me pretty much the same answer. “What are we to do ? We have been reading or writing official papers all day, and in the evening we like to have a little relaxation. When we come together we have very little to talk about, for we have all read the daily papers and nothing more. The best thing we can do is to sit down at the card-table, where we can spend our time pleasantly, without the necessity of talking.”

In addition to the daily papers, some people read the monthly periodicals—big, thick volumes, containing several serious articles on historical and social subjects, sections of one or two novels, satirical sketches, and a long review of home and foreign politics on the model of those which appear regularly in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Several of these periodicals are very ably con-

ducted, and offer to their readers a large amount of valuable information ; but I have noticed that the leaves of the more serious part often remain uncut. The translation of a novel by Emile Zola or Wilkie Collins finds many more readers than an article by an historian or a political economist. As to books, they seem to be very little read, for during all the time I lived in Novgorod I never discovered a bookseller's shop, and when I required books I had to get them sent from St. Petersburg. The local administration, it is true, conceived the project of forming a museum and circulating library, but I am not sure that the project was ever realized. Of all the magnificent projects that are formed in Russia, only a very small percentage come into existence, and these are too often very short-lived. The Russians have learned theoretically what are the wants of the most advanced civilization, and are ever ready to rush into the grand schemes which their theoretical knowledge suggests ; but very few of them really and permanently feel these wants, and consequently the institutions artificially formed to satisfy them very soon languish and die. In the provincial towns the shops for the sale of gastronomic delicacies spring up and flourish, whilst shops for the sale of intellectual food are rarely to be met with. The conclusion to be drawn from these facts is obvious.

About the beginning of December the ordinary monotony of Novgorod life is a little relieved by the annual Provincial Assembly, which sits daily for two or three weeks and discusses the economic wants of the province. During this time a good many landed proprietors, who habitually live on their estates or in St. Petersburg, collect in the town, and enliven a little the ordinary society. But as Christmas approaches the deputies disperse, and again the town becomes enshrouded in that "eternal stillness" (*vétehnaya tishiná*) which a native poet has declared to be the essential characteristic of Russian provincial life.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE IMPERIAL ADMINISTRATION AND THE OFFICIALS.

The Officials in Novgorod, with the exception of the Vice-Governor, assist me in my Studies—The Modern Imperial Administration created by Peter the Great, and developed by his Successors—A Slavophil's View of the Administration—The Administration briefly described—The *Tchinovniki*, or Officials—Official Titles and their real Significance—What the Administration has done for Russia in the Past—Its Character determined by the peculiar relation between the Government and the People—Its Radical Vices—Bureaucratic Remedies—Complicated Formal Procedure—The Gendarmerie: my Personal Relations with this Branch of the Administration; Arrest and Release—A strong, healthy Public Opinion the only effectual Remedy for Bad Administration; this Principle recently exemplified in Russia.

ONE of my reasons, as I have said, for taking up my winter quarters in Novgorod was that I might there study the provincial administration; and as soon as a convenient opportunity presented itself I communicated my intention to the Governor and Vice-Governor. Both of these gentlemen, as well as some of the other officials, at once promised to afford me all the assistance in their power, and I accordingly congratulated myself on the choice I had made, but my first attempt to take advantage of the promises thus given diminished considerably my sanguine expectations. When I called one evening on the Vice-Governor, and reminded him of his friendly offers, I found that he had in the meantime, like the merchant of whom I spoke in a former chapter, changed his mind. Instead of answering my first simple inquiry, he stared at me fixedly, as if for the purpose of detecting some covert, malicious design, and then, putting on an air of official dignity, informed me that, as I had not been authorized by the Minister to make these investigations, he could not assist me, and would certainly not allow me to examine the archives.

This was not encouraging, but it did not prevent me from apply-

ing to the Governor and the other officials, and I found to my delight that they had no scruples about rendering me assistance. The Governor willingly explained to me the mechanism of provincial administration, and indicated to me the works in which I could find the theoretical and historical information which I required ; and the minor officials initiated me into the mysteries of their respective departments. At last the Vice-Governor himself followed the example of his colleagues, but I politely declined his services. The elementary information thus acquired I had afterwards abundant opportunities of completing by observation and study, and I now propose to communicate to the reader a few of the more general results which I have obtained.

The gigantic administrative machine which holds together all the various parts of the vast Empire, and secures for all of them a certain amount of public order and tranquillity, has been gradually created by successive generations, but we may say roughly that it was first designed and constructed by Peter the Great. Before his time the country was governed in a rude, primitive fashion. The Grand Princes of Moscow, in subduing their rivals and annexing the surrounding principalities, merely cleared the ground for a great homogeneous State, and made no attempt to build a symmetrical political edifice. Wily, practical politicians, rather than statesmen of the doctrinaire type, they never dreamed of introducing uniformity and symmetry into the administration. They spared and developed the ancient institutions, so far as these were useful and consistent with the exercise of autocratic power, and made only such alterations as practical necessity demanded. And these necessary alterations were more frequently local than general. Special decisions, instruction to particular officials, and charters for particular communes or proprietors, were much more common than general legislative measures. In short, the old Muscovite Tsars practiced a tentative, hand-to-mouth policy, ruthlessly destroying whatever caused temporary inconvenience, and giving little heed to what did not force itself upon their attention. Hence, under their rule the administration presented not only territorial peculiarities, but also an ill-assorted combination of different systems in the same district—a conglomeration of institutions belonging to different epochs, like a fleet composed of triremes, three-deckers, and ironclads.

This irregular system, or rather want of system, seemed highly

unsatisfactory to the logical mind of Peter the Great, who was all his life a thorough doctrinaire. He conceived the grand design of sweeping it away, and putting in its place a symmetrical bureaucratic machine, constructed according to the newest principles of political science. It is scarcely necessary to say that this magnificent project, so foreign to the traditional ideas and customs of the people, was not easily realized. Imagine a man, without technical knowledge, without skilled workmen, without good tools, and with no better material than soft, crumbling sandstone, endeavoring to build a palace on a marsh! The undertaking would seem to reasonable minds utterly absurd, and yet it must be admitted that Peter's project was scarcely more feasible. He had neither technical knowledge, nor the requisite materials, nor a firm foundation to build on. With his usual Titanic energy he demolished the old structure, but his attempts to construct were little more than a series of failures. In his numerous ukazes he has left us a graphic description of his efforts, and it is at once instructive and saddening to watch the great worker toiling indefatigably at his self-imposed task. His instruments are constantly breaking in his hands. The foundations of the building are continually giving way, and the lower tiers crumbling under the superincumbent weight. A whole section is found to be unsuitable, and is ruthlessly pulled down, or falls of its own accord. And yet the builder toils on, with a perseverance and energy of purpose that compel admiration, frankly confessing his mistakes and failures, and patiently seeking the means of remedying them, never allowing a word of despondency to escape him, and never despairing of ultimate success. And at length death comes, and the mighty builder is snatched away suddenly in the midst of his unfinished labors, bequeathing to his successors the task of carrying on the great work.

None of these successors possessed Peter's genius and energy, but they were all compelled by the force of circumstances to adopt his plans. A return to the old rough and ready rule of the *Voyevods* was impossible. As the autocratic power became more and more imbued with Western ideas, it felt more and more the need of a thoroughly good instrument for the realization of its policy, and accordingly strove to systematize and centralize the administration.

In this change we may perceive a certain analogy with the his-

tory of the French administration from the time of Philippe le Bel to that of Louis XIV. In both countries we see the central power bringing the local administrative organs more and more under its control, till at last it succeeds in creating a thoroughly centralized bureaucratic organization. But under this superficial resemblance lie profound differences. The French kings had to struggle with provincial sovereignties and feudal rights, and when they had annihilated this opposition, they easily found materials with which to build up the bureaucratic structure. The Russian sovereigns, on the contrary, met with no such opposition, but they had great difficulty in finding bureaucratic material amongst their uneducated, undisciplined subjects. For many generations schools and colleges in Russia were founded and maintained simply for the purpose of preparing men for the public service.

The administration was thus brought much nearer to the West-European ideal, but some people have grave doubts as to whether it became thereby better adapted to the practical wants of the people for whom it was created. On this point, a well-known Slavophil once made to me some remarks which are worthy of being recorded. "You have observed," he said, "that till very recently there was in Russia an enormous amount of official peculation, extortion, and misgovernment of every kind, that the courts of law were dens of iniquity, that the people often committed perjury, and much more of the same sort, and it must be admitted that all this has not yet entirely disappeared. But what does it prove? That the Russian people are morally inferior to the German? Not at all. It simply proves that the German system of administration, which was forced upon them without their consent, was utterly unsuited to their nature. If a young growing boy be compelled to wear very tight boots, he will probably burst them, and the ugly rents will doubtless produce an unfavorable impression on the passers-by; but surely it is better that the boots should burst than that the feet should be deformed. Now the Russian people was compelled to put on not only tight boots, but also a tight jacket, and, being young and vigorous, it burst them. Narrow-minded, pedantic Germans can neither understand nor provide for the wants of the broad Slavonic nature."

In its present form the Russian administration seems at first sight a very imposing edifice. At the top of the pyramid stands the Emperor, "the autocratic monarch," as Peter the Great de-

scribed him, "who has to give an account of his acts to no one on earth, but has a power and authority to rule his states and lands as a Christian sovereign according to his own will and judgment." Immediately below the Emperor we see the Council of State, the Committee of Ministers, and the Senate, which represent respectively the legislative, the administrative, and the judicial power. An Englishman glancing over the first volume of the Code might imagine that the Council of State is a kind of parliament, and the Committee of Ministers a ministry in our sense of the term, but in reality both institutions are simply incarnations of the autocratic power. Though the Council is intrusted by law with many important functions—such as examining and criticising the annual budget, declaring war, concluding peace, and performing other important duties—it has merely a consultative character, and the Emperor is not in any way bound by its decisions. The Committee is not at all a ministry as we understand the word. The ministers are all directly and individually responsible to the Emperor, and therefore the Committee has no common responsibility or other cohesive force. As to the Senate, it has descended from its high estate. It was originally intrusted with the supreme power during the absence or minority of the monarch, and was intended to exercise a controlling influence in all sections of the administration, but now its activity is restricted to judicial matters, and it is little more than a supreme court of appeal.

Immediately below these three institutions stand the Ministries,* ten in number. They are the central points, in which converge the various kinds of territorial administration, and from which radiates the Imperial will all over the Empire.

For the purposes of territorial administration Russia Proper—that is to say, European Russia, exclusive of Poland, the Baltic Provinces, Finland, and the Caucasus, each of which has a peculiar administration of its own†—is divided into forty-six provinces, or "Governments" (*gubernii*), and each Government is subdivided into districts (*uyezdi*). The average area of a province is

* The ten sections of the administration are—(1) the Interior, (2) Public Works, (3) State Domesties, (4) Finance, (5) Justice, (6) Public Instruction, (7) War, (8) Navy, (9) Foreign Affairs, (10) the Imperial Court.

† The peculiarities of administration in Poland are being rapidly abolished.

about the size of Portugal, but some are as small as Belgium, whilst one at least is twenty-five times as big. The population, however, does not correspond to the amount of territory. In the largest province, that of Archangel, there are less than 300,000 inhabitants, whilst in some of the smaller ones there are over two millions. The districts likewise vary greatly in size. Some are smaller than Oxfordshire or Buckingham, and others are much bigger than the whole of the United Kingdom.

Over each province is placed a Governor, who is assisted in his duties by a Vice-Governor and a small council. According to the legislation of Catherine II., which still appears in the Code and has only been partially repealed, the Governor is termed "the steward of the province," and is intrusted with so many and such delicate duties, that in order to obtain men qualified for the post, it would be necessary to realize the great Empress's design of creating, by education, "a new race of people." Down to very recent times the Governors understood the term "stewards" in a very literal sense, and ruled in a most arbitrary, high-handed style, often exercising an important influence on the civil and criminal tribunals. These extensive and vaguely-defined powers have now been very much curtailed, partly by positive legislation, and partly by increased publicity and improved means of communication. All judicial matters have been placed completely beyond the Governor's control, and many of his former functions are now fulfilled by the Zemstvo—the new organ of local self-government, of which I shall have more to say presently. Besides this, all ordinary current affairs are regulated by an already big and ever-growing body of instructions, in the form of Imperial orders and ministerial circulars, and as soon as anything not provided for by the instructions happens to occur, the minister is consulted through the post-office or by telegraph. Even within the sphere of their lawful authority the Governors have now a certain respect for public opinion, and occasionally a very wholesome dread of casual newspaper correspondents. Thus the men who were formerly described by the satirists as "little satraps," have sunk to the level of very subordinate officials. I can confidently say that many (I believe the majority) of them are honest, upright men, who are perhaps not endowed with any unusual administrative capacities, but who perform their duties faithfully according to their lights. Certainly, M. Lerche, who was Governor of Novgorod during my sojourn

there, was a most honorable, conscientious, and intelligent man, who had gained golden opinions from all classes of the people. If any representatives of the old "satraps" still exist, they must be sought for in the outlying Asiatic provinces.

Independent of the Governor, who is the local representative of the Ministry of the Interior, are a number of resident officials, who represent the other ministries, and each of them has a bureau, with the requisite number of assistants, secretaries, and scribes.

To keep this vast and complex bureaucratic machine in motion it is necessary to have a large and well-drilled army of officials. These are drawn chiefly from the ranks of the noblesse and the clergy, and form a peculiar social class called *Tchinovniks*, or men with "*Tchins*." As the *Tchin* plays an important part in Russia not only in the official world, but also to some extent in social life, it may be well to explain its significance.

All offices, civil and military, are, according to a scheme invented by Peter the Great, arranged in fourteen classes or ranks, and to each class or rank a particular name is attached. As promotion is supposed to be given according to personal merit, a man who enters the public service for the first time must, whatever be his social position, begin in the lower ranks, and work his way upwards. Educational certificates may exempt him from the necessity of passing through the lowest classes, and the Imperial will may disregard the restrictions laid down by law, but as a general rule a man must begin at or near the bottom of the official ladder, and he must remain on each step a certain specified time. The step on which he is for the moment standing, or, in other words, the official rank or *Tchin* which he possesses, determines what offices he is competent to hold. Thus rank or *Tchin* is a necessary condition for receiving an appointment, but it does not designate any actual office, and the names of the different ranks are extremely apt to mislead a foreigner.

We must always bear this in mind when we meet with those imposing titles which Russian tourists sometimes put on their visiting-cards, such as "*Conseiller de Cour*," "*Conseiller d'État*," "*Conseiller privé de S. M. l'Empereur de toutes les Russies*." It would be uncharitable to suppose that these titles are used with the intention of misleading, but that they do sometimes mislead there cannot be the least doubt. I shall never forget the look of intense disgust which I once saw on the face of an American who

had invited to dinner a "Conseiller de Cour," on the assumption that he would have a court dignitary as his guest, and who casually discovered that the personage in question was simply an insignificant official in one of the public offices. No doubt other people have had similar experiences. The unwary foreigner who has heard that there is in Russia a very important institution called the "Conseil d'État," naturally supposes that a "Conseiller d'État" is a member of that venerable body; and if he meets "Son Excellence le Conseiller privé," he is pretty sure to assume—especially if the word "actuel" has been affixed—that he sees a real living member of the Russian Privy Council. When to the title is added, "de S.M. l'Empereur de toutes les Russies," a boundless field is opened up to the non-Russian imagination. In reality these titles are not nearly so important as they seem. The *soi-disant* "Conseiller de Cour" has probably nothing to do with the court. The Conseillor d'Etat is so far from being a member of the Conseil d'Etat that he cannot possibly become a member till he receives a higher Tchín.* As to the Privy Counsellor, it is sufficient to say that the Privy Council, which had a very odious reputation in its lifetime, died more than a century ago, and has not since been resuscitated. The explanation of these anomalies is to be found in the fact that the Russian Tchíns, like the German honorary titles—Hofrath, Staatsrath, Geheimrath—of which they are a literal translation, indicate not actual office, but simply official rank. Formerly the appointment to an office generally depended on the Tchín; now there is a tendency to reverse the old order of things and make the Tchín depend upon the office actually held.

The reader of practical mind who is in the habit of considering results rather than forms and formalities desires probably no further description of the Russian bureaucracy, but wishes to know simply how it works in practice. What has it done for Russia in the past, and what is it doing in the present?

At the present day, when faith in despotic civilizers and paternal government has been rudely shaken, and the advantages of a free, spontaneous national development are fully recognized, centralized bureaucracies have everywhere fallen into bad odor. In

* In Russian the two words are quite different; the Council is called *Gosudarstvenny Sovêt*, and the title *Statski Sovêtnik*.

Russia the dislike to them is particularly strong, because it has there something more than a purely theoretical basis. The recollection of the reign of Nicholas, with its stern military régime, and minute, pedantic formalism, makes many Russians condemn in no measured terms the administration under which they live, and most Englishmen will feel inclined to indorse this condemnation. Before passing sentence, however, we ought to know that the system has at least an historical justification, and we must not allow our love of constitutional liberty and local self-government to bind us to the distinction between theoretical and historical possibility. What seems to political philosophers abstractly the best possible government may be utterly inapplicable in certain concrete cases. We need not attempt to decide whether it is better for humanity that Russia should exist as a nation, but we may boldly assert that without a strongly centralized administration Russia would never have become one of the great European powers. Until comparatively recent times the part of the world which is known as the Russian Empire was a conglomeration of independent or semi-independent political units, animated with centrifugal as well as centripetal forces; and even at the present day it is far from being a compact homogeneous State. In many respects it resembles our Indian Empire more closely than a European country, and we all know what India would become if the strong cohesive power of the administration were withdrawn. It was the autocratic power, with the centralized administration as its necessary complement, that first created Russia, then saved her from dismemberment and political annihilation, and ultimately secured for her a place among European nations by introducing Western civilization. Theoretically it would have been better that the various units should have united spontaneously, and that European civilization should have been voluntarily adopted by all classes of the inhabitants, but historically such a phenomenon was impossible.

Whilst thus recognizing clearly that autocracy and a strongly centralized administration were necessary first for the creation and afterwards for the preservation of national independence, we must not shut our eyes to the evil consequences which resulted from this unfortunate necessity. It was in the nature of things that the Government, aiming at the realization of designs which its subjects neither sympathized with nor clearly understood,

should have become separated from the nation ; and the reckless haste and violence with which it attempted to carry out its schemes aroused a spirit of positive opposition among the people. A considerable section of the people long looked on the reforming Tsars as incarnations of the spirit of evil, and the Tsars in their turn looked upon the people as a passive instrument for the carrying out of their political designs. This peculiar relation between the nation and the Government has given the key-note to the whole system of administration. The Government has always treated the people as minors, utterly incapable of understanding its political designs, and only very partially competent to look after their own local affairs. The officials have naturally acted in the same spirit. Looking for direction and approbation merely to their superiors, they have systematically treated those over whom they were placed, as a conquered or inferior race. The State has thus come to be regarded as an abstract entity, with interests entirely different from those of the human beings composing it ; and in all matters in which State interests are supposed to be involved, the rights of individuals are ruthlessly sacrificed.

If we remember that the difficulties of centralized administration are always in direct proportion to the extent and territorial variety of the country to be governed, we may readily understand how slowly and imperfectly the administrative machine necessarily works in Russia. The whole of the vast region stretching from the Polar Ocean to the Caspian, and from the shores of the Baltic to the confines of the Celestial Empire, is administered from St. Petersburg. The genuine bureaucrat has a wholesome dread of formal responsibility, and generally tries to avoid it by taking all matters out of the hands of his subordinates, and passing them on to the higher authorities. As soon, therefore, as affairs are caught up by the administrative machine they begin to ascend, and probably arrive some day at the cabinet of the minister. Thus the ministries are flooded with papers—many of the most trivial import—from all parts of the Empire ; and the higher officials, even if they had the eyes of an Argus and the hands of a Briareus, could not possibly fulfill conscientiously the duties imposed on them. In reality the Russian administrators of the higher ranks recall neither Argus nor Briareus. They commonly show neither an extensive nor a profound knowledge of the

country which they are supposed to govern, and seem always to have a fair amount of leisure time at their disposal.

Besides the unavoidable evils of excessive centralization, Russia has had to suffer much from the jobbery, venality, and extortion of the officials. When Peter the Great one day prepared to hang every man who should steal as much as would buy a rope, his Procurator-General frankly replied that if his Majesty put his project into execution there would be no officials left. "We all steal," added the worthy official; "the only difference is that some of us steal larger amounts and more openly than others." Since these words were spoken more than a century and a half has passed, and during all that time Russia has steadily made progress in many respects, but until the commencement of the present reign little change took place in the moral character of the administration. The elder half of the present generation can still remember the time when they could have repeated, without much exaggeration, the confession of Peter's Procurator-General.

To appreciate aright this ugly phenomenon we must distinguish two kinds of venality. On the one hand there was the habit of exacting what are vulgarly termed "tips" for services performed, and on the other there were the various kinds of positive dishonesty. Though it might not be always easy to draw a clear line between the two categories, the distinction was fully recognized in the moral consciousness of the time, and many an official who received regularly "sinless revenues" (*bezgreshniye dokhodi*), as the tips were sometimes called, would have been very indignant had he been stigmatized as a dishonest man. The practice was, in fact, universal, and could be, to a certain extent, justified by the smallness of the official salaries. In some departments there was a recognized tariff. The "brandy farmers," for example, paid regularly a fixed sum to every official, from the governor to the policeman, according to his rank. I know of one case where an official, on receiving a larger sum than was customary, conscientiously handed back the change! The other and more heinous offenses were by no means so common, but were still fearfully frequent. Many high officials and important dignitaries were known to receive large revenues, to which the term "sinless" could not by any means be applied, and yet they retained their position, and were received in society with respectful deference.

That undeniable fact speaks volumes for the moral atmosphere of the official world at that time.

The sovereigns were always perfectly aware of the abuses, and all strove more or less to root them out, but the success which attended their efforts does not give us a very exalted idea of the practical omnipotence of autocracy. In a centralized bureaucratic administration, in which each official is to a certain extent responsible for the sins of his subordinates, it is always extremely difficult to bring an official culprit to justice, for he is sure to be protected by his superiors; and when the superiors are themselves habitually guilty of malpractices, the culprit is quite safe from exposure and punishment. The Tsar, indeed, might do much towards exposing and punishing offenders, if he could venture to call in public opinion to his assistance, but in reality he is very apt to become a party to the system of hushing up official delinquencies. He is himself the first official in the realm, and he knows that the abuse of power by a subordinate has a tendency to produce hostility towards the fountain of all official power. Frequent punishment of officials might, it is thought, diminish public respect for the Government, and undermine that social discipline which is necessary for the public tranquillity. It is therefore considered expedient to give to official delinquencies as little publicity as possible. Besides this, strange as it may seem, a Government which rests on the arbitrary will of a single individual is, notwithstanding occasional outbursts of severity, much less systematically and invariably severe than authority founded on free public opinion. When delinquencies occur in very high places the Tsar is almost sure to display a leniency approaching to tenderness. If it be necessary to make a sacrifice to justice, the sacrificial operation is likely to be made as painless as may be, and illustrious scapegoats are not allowed to die of starvation in the wilderness—the wilderness being generally Paris or Baden-Baden. This fact may seem strange to those who are in the habit of associating autocracy with Neapolitan dungeons and the mines of Siberia, but it is not difficult to explain. No individual, even though he should be the Autocrat of all the Russias, can so case himself in the armor of official dignity as to be completely proof against personal influences. The severity of autocrats is reserved for political offenders, against whom they naturally harbor a feeling of personal resentment. It is so much

easier for us to be lenient and charitable towards a man who sins against public morality, than towards one who sins against our own interests!

In justice to the bureaucratic reformers in Russia, it must be said that they have preferred prevention to cure. Refraining from all Draconian legislation, they have put their faith in a system of ingenious checks and a complicated formal procedure. When we examine the complicated formalities and labyrinthine procedure by which the administration is controlled, our first impression is that administrative abuses must be almost impossible. Every possible act of every official seems to have been foreseen, and every possible outlet from the narrow path of honesty seems to have been carefully walled up. As the English reader has probably no conception of formal procedure in a highly centralized bureaucracy, let me give an instance by way of illustration.

In the residence of a Governor-General one of the stoves is in need of repairs. An ordinary mortal may assume that a man with the rank of Governor-General may be trusted to expend a few shillings conscientiously, and that consequently his Excellency will at once order the repairs to be made and the payment to be put down among the petty expenses. To the bureaucratic mind the case appears in a very different light. All possible contingencies must be carefully provided for. As a Governor-General may possibly be possessed with a mania for making useless alterations, the necessity of the repairs ought to be verified; and as wisdom and honesty are more likely to reside in an assembly than in an individual, it is well to intrust the verification to a council. A council of three or four members accordingly certifies that the repairs are necessary. This is pretty strong authority, but it is not enough. Councils are composed of mere human beings, liable to error and subject to be intimidated by the Governor-General. It is prudent, therefore, to demand that the decision of the council be confirmed by the Procureur, who is directly subordinated to the Minister of Justice. When this double confirmation has been obtained, an architect examines the stove, and makes an estimate. But it would be dangerous to give *carte blanche* to an architect, and therefore the estimate has to be confirmed, first by the afore-said council and afterwards by the Procureur. When all these formalities—which require sixteen days and ten sheets of paper—have been duly observed, his Excellency is informed that the con-

templated repairs will cost two roubles and forty kopeks, or about five shillings of our money. Even here the formalities do not stop, for the Government must have the assurance that the architect who made the estimate and superintended the repairs has not been guilty of negligence. A second architect is therefore sent to examine the work, and his report, like the estimate, requires to be confirmed by the council and the Procureur. The whole correspondence lasts thirty days, and requires no less than thirty sheets of paper ! Had the person who desired the repairs been not a Governor-General but an ordinary mortal, it is impossible to say how long the procedure might have lasted.

It might naturally be supposed that this circuitous and complicated method, with its registers, ledgers, and minutes of proceeding, must at least prevent pilfering ; but this *à priori* conclusion has been emphatically belied by experience. Every new ingenious device had merely the effect of producing a still more ingenious means of avoiding it. The system did not restrain those who wished to pilfer, and it had a deleterious effect on honest officials, by making them feel that the Government reposed no confidence in them. Besides this, it produced among all officials, honest and dishonest alike, the habit of systematic falsification. As it was impossible for even the most pedantic of men—and pedantry, be it remarked, is a rare quality among Russians—to fulfill conscientiously all the prescribed formalities, it became customary to observe the forms merely on paper. Officials certified facts which they never dreamed of examining, and secretaries gravely wrote the minutes of meetings that had never been held ! Thus, in the case above cited, the repairs were in reality begun and ended long before the architect was officially authorized to begin the work. The comedy was nevertheless gravely played out to the end, so that any one afterwards revising the documents would have found that everything had been done in perfect order.

Perhaps the most ingenious means for preventing administrative abuses was devised by the Emperor Nicholas. Fully aware that he was regularly and systematically deceived by the ordinary officials, he formed a body of well-paid officers, called the “Gendarmerie,” who were scattered over the country, and ordered to report directly to his Majesty whatever seemed to them worthy of attention. Bureaucratic minds considered this an admirable expedient ; and the Tsar confidently expected that he would, by

means of these official observers who had no interest in concealing the truth, be able to know everything, and to correct all official abuses. In reality the institution produced a few good results, and in some respects had a very pernicious influence. Though picked men and provided with good salaries, these officers were all more or less permeated with the prevailing spirit. They could not but feel that they were regarded as spies and informers—a humiliating conviction, little calculated to develop that feeling of self-respect which is the main foundation of uprightness—and that all their efforts could do but little good. They were, in fact, in pretty much the same position as Peter's Procurator-General, and, with that *bonhomie* which is a prominent trait of the Russian character, they disliked ruining individuals who were no worse than the majority of their fellows. Besides this, according to the received code of official morality, insubordination was a more heinous sin than dishonesty, and political offenses were regarded as the blackest of all. The Gendarmerie shut their eyes, therefore, to the prevailing abuses, which were believed to be incurable, and directed their attention to real or imaginary political delinquencies. Oppression and extortion remained unnoticed, whilst an incautious word or a foolish joke at the expense of the Government was too often magnified into an act of high treason.

This force still exists, and has at least one representative in every important town. It serves as a kind of supplement to the ordinary police, and is generally employed in all matters in which secrecy is required. Unfortunately it is not bound by those legal restrictions which protect the public against the arbitrary will of the ordinary authorities. It has a vaguely-defined roving commission, to watch and arrest all persons who seem to it in any way dangerous or *suspectes*, and it may keep such in confinement for an indefinite time, or remove them to some distant and inhospitable part of the Empire, without making them undergo a regular trial. It is, in short, the ordinary instrument for punishing political dreamers, suppressing secret societies, counteracting political agitations, and in general executing the extra-legal orders of the Government.

My relations with this anomalous branch of the administration were somewhat peculiar. After my experience with the Vice-Governor of Novgorod, I determined to place myself above suspicion, and accordingly applied to the "Chef des Gendarmes" for

some kind of official document which would prove to all officials with whom I might come in contact that I had no illicit designs. My request was granted, and I was furnished with the necessary documents; but I soon found that in seeking to avoid Scylla I had fallen into Charybdis. In calming official suspicions I inadvertently aroused suspicions of another kind. The documents proving that I enjoyed the protection of the Government made many people suspect that I was an emissary of the gendarmerie, and greatly impeded me in my efforts to collect information from private sources. As the private were for me more important than the official sources of information, I refrained from asking for a renewal of the protection, and wandered about the country as an ordinary unprotected traveler. For some time I had no cause to regret this decision. I had reason to believe that I was pretty closely watched, and that my letters were sometimes opened at the post-office, but I was subjected to no further inconvenience. At last, however, when I had nearly forgotten all about Scylla and Charybdis, I one night unexpectedly ran upon the former, and, to my astonishment, found myself formally arrested! The incident happened in this wise.

In the summer of 1872 I had occasion to visit Austria and Servia, and after a short absence, returned to Russia through Moldavia. On arriving at the Pruth, which there forms the frontier, I found an officer of gendarmerie, whose duty it was to examine the passports of all passers-by. Though my passport was completely *en règle*, having been duly *visé* by the British and Russian Consuls at Galatz, this gentleman subjected me to a searching examination regarding my past life, actual occupation, and intentions for the future. On learning that I had been for more than two years traveling in Russia at my own expense, for the simple purpose of collecting miscellaneous information, he looked a little incredulous, and seemed to have some doubts as to my being a genuine British subject; but when my statements were confirmed by my traveling companion, a Russian friend who carried awe-inspiring credentials, he countersigned my passport, and allowed us to depart. The inspection of our luggage by the custom-house officers was soon got over; and as we drove off to the neighboring village, where we were to spend the night, we congratulated ourselves on having escaped for some time from all contact with the official world. In this we were "reckoning

without the host." As the clock struck twelve that night I was roused by a loud knocking at my door, and after a good deal of parley, during which some one proposed to effect an entrance by force, I drew the bolt. The officer who had signed my passport entered, and said, in a stiff, official tone, "I must request you to remain here for twenty-four hours."

Not a little astonished by this announcement, I ventured to inquire the reason for this strange request.

"That is my business," was the laconic reply.

"Perhaps it is ; still you must, on mature consideration, admit that I too have some interest in the matter. To my extreme regret I cannot comply with your request, and must leave at sunrise."

"You shall not leave. Give me your passport."

"Unless detained by force, I shall start at four o'clock ; and as I wish to get some sleep before that time I must request you instantly to retire. You had the right to stop me at the frontier, but you have no right to come and disturb me in this fashion, and I shall certainly report you. My passport I shall give to none but a regular officer of police."

Here followed a long discussion on the rights, privileges, and general character of the gendarmerie, during which my opponent gradually laid aside his dictatorial tone, and endeavored to convince me that the honorable body to which he belonged was merely an ordinary branch of the administration. Though evidently irritated, he never, I must say, overstepped the bounds of politeness, and seemed only half convinced that he was justified in interfering with my movements. When he found that he could not induce me to give up my passport he withdrew, and I again lay down to rest, but in about half an hour I was again disturbed. This time an officer of regular police entered, and demanded my "papers." To my inquiries as to the reason of all this disturbance, he replied, in a very polite, apologetic way, that he knew nothing about the reason, but he had received orders to arrest me, and must obey. To him I delivered my passport, on condition that I should receive a written receipt, and should be allowed to telegraph to the British ambassador in St. Petersburg.

Early next morning I telegraphed to the ambassador, and waited impatiently all day for a reply. I was allowed to walk about the village and the immediate vicinity, but of this permission I did not make much use. The village population was

entirely Jewish, and Jews in that part of the world have a wonderful capacity for spreading intelligence. By the early morning there was probably not a man, woman, or child in the place who had not heard of my arrest, and many of them felt a not unnatural curiosity to see the malefactor who had been caught by the police. To be stared at as a malefactor is not very agreeable, so I preferred to remain in my room, where, in the company of my friend, who kindly remained with me and made small jokes about the boasted liberty of British subjects, I spent the time pleasantly enough. The most disagreeable part of the affair was the uncertainty as to how many days, weeks, or months I might be detained, and on this point the police-officer would not even hazard a conjecture.

The detention came to an end sooner than I expected. On the following day—that is to say, about thirty-six hours after the nocturnal visit—the police-officer brought me my passport, and at the same time a telegram from the Embassy informed me that the central authorities had ordered my release. On my afterwards pertinaciously requesting an explanation of the unceremonious treatment to which I had been subjected, the Minister for Foreign Affairs explained that the authorities expected a person of my name to cross the frontier about that time with a quantity of false bank-notes, and that I had been arrested by mistake. I must confess that this explanation, though official, seemed to me more ingenious than satisfactory, but I was obliged to accept it, and I had never afterwards any similar cause for complaint.

From all I have seen and heard of the gendarmerie I am disposed to believe that the officers are for the most part polite, well-educated men, who seek to fulfill their disagreeable duties in as inoffensive a way as possible. It must, however, be admitted that they are generally regarded with suspicion and dislike, even by those timid people who fear the foolish attempts at revolutionary propaganda which it is the special duty of the gendarmerie to discover and suppress. Nor need this surprise us. Though very many people believe in the necessity of capital punishment, there are very few who do not feel a decided aversion to the public executioner.

To return from this digression. Neither the gendarmerie nor the ingenious formal procedure materially diminished the venality, dishonesty, and other vices of the officials. The attempt to

remedy these evils by means of decentralization and popular election proved equally unsuccessful. From the time of Catherine II. down to the commencement of the present reign the rural police and the judges of each province and district were elected by the local inhabitants, and the history of these institutions, which were, if possible, worse than the Imperial administration, forms an ugly, inconvenient episode for those who believe in the magical efficacy of local self-government under all circumstances.

The only effectual remedy for administrative abuses lies in placing the administration under public control. This has been abundantly proved in Russia. All the efforts of the Tsars during many generations to check the evil by means of ingenious bureaucratic devices proved utterly fruitless. Even the iron will and gigantic energy of Nicholas were insufficient for the task. But when, after the Crimean War, there was a great moral awakening and the Tsar called the people to his assistance, the stubborn, deep-rooted evils immediately disappeared. For a time venality and extortion were unknown, and since that period they have never been able to regain their old force.

At the present moment it cannot be said that the administration is immaculate, but it is incomparably purer than at any former period of its history.* Though public opinion is no longer so powerful as it was a few years ago, it is still strong enough to repress many malpractices which in the time of Nicholas and his predecessors were too frequent to attract attention. On this subject I shall have more to say in the sequel.

* The only officials who still enjoy a decidedly bad reputation are the engineers and the foresters.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE NEW LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

Favorable Opportunity of studying the Zemstvo—Russian self-criticism—Parliamentary form of the Zemstvo—A District Assembly—Nobles and *ci-devant* Serfs—A Provincial Assembly—The Leading Members—Character of different Zemstvos—Origin and Purpose of the Institution—Bureaucratic Lawmaking—Inordinate Expectations—What the Zemstvo has done—Its Want of Vitality explained—British and Russian Methods of creating Institutions—A Characteristic Incident—Future of the Institution.

VERY soon after my arrival in Novgorod I made the acquaintance of a gentleman, who was described to me as “the president of the provincial Zemstvo-bureau,” and finding him amiable and communicative I suggested that he might give me some information regarding the institution of which he was the chief representative. With the utmost readiness he prepared to be my Mentor with regard to the Zemstvo, at once introduced me to his colleagues, and invited me to come and see him at his office as often as I felt inclined. Of this invitation I made abundant use. At first my visits were discreetly few and short, but when I found that my friend and his colleagues really wished to instruct me in all the details of Zemstvo administration, and had arranged a special table for my convenience, I became a regular attendant, and spent daily several hours in the bureau, studying the current affairs, and noting down the interesting bits of statistical and other information which came before the members, as if I had been one of their number. When they went to inspect the hospital, the lunatic asylum, the seminary for the preparation of village schoolmasters, or any other Zemstvo institution, they invariably invited me to accompany them, and made no attempt to conceal from me the defects which they happened to discover.

I mention these facts because they illustrate well the extreme readiness of the Russians to afford every possible facility to a

foreigner who wishes seriously to study their country. They believe that they have long been misunderstood and systematically calumniated by foreigners, and they are extremely desirous that all misconceptions regarding their country should be removed. It must be said to their honor that they have little or none of that false patriotism which seeks to conceal national defects; and in judging themselves and their institutions they are inclined to be over-severe rather than unduly lenient. In the time of Nicholas those who desired to stand well with the Government proclaimed loudly that they lived in the happiest and best governed country of the world, but this shallow official optimism has long since gone out of fashion. During the six years which I spent in Russia I found everywhere the utmost readiness to assist me in my investigations, and very rarely noticed that habit of "throwing dust in the eyes of foreigners," of which some writers have spoken so much.

The Zemstvo is a kind of local administration which supplements the action of the rural communes, and takes cognizance of those higher public wants which individual communes cannot possibly satisfy. Its principal duties are to keep the roads and bridges in proper repair, to provide means of conveyance for the rural police and other officials, to elect the justices of peace, to look after primary education and sanitary affairs, to watch the state of the crops and take measures against approaching famine, and in short to undertake, within certain clearly-defined limits, whatever seems likely to increase the material and moral well-being of the population. In form the institution is parliamentary—that is to say, it consists of an assembly of deputies which meets at least once a year, and of a permanent executive bureau elected by the assembly from among its members. If the assembly be regarded as a local parliament, the bureau corresponds to the ministry. In accordance with this analogy my friend the president was sometimes jocularly termed the prime minister. Once every three years the deputies are elected in certain fixed proportions by the landed proprietors, the rural communes, and the municipal corporations. Every province (*guberniya*) and each of the districts (*uyezdi*) into which the province is subdivided has such an assembly and such a bureau.

Not long after my arrival in Novgorod I had the opportunity of being present at a District Assembly. In the ball-room of the

"Club de la Noblesse" I found thirty or forty men seated round a long table covered with green cloth. Before each member lay sheets of paper for the purpose of taking notes, and before the president—the Marshal of Noblesse for the district—stood a small hand-bell, which he rang vigorously at the commencement of the proceedings and on all occasions when he wished to obtain silence. To the right and left of the president sat the members of the executive bureau (*uprava*), armed with piles of written and printed documents, from which they read long and tedious extracts, till the majority of the audience took to yawning and one or two of the members positively went to sleep. At the close of each of these reports the president rang his bell—presumably for the purpose of awakening the sleepers—and inquired whether any one had remarks to make on what had just been read. Generally some one had remarks to make, and not unfrequently a discussion ensued. When any decided difference of opinion appeared, a vote was taken by handing round a sheet of paper, or by the simpler method of requesting the Ayes to stand up and the Noes to sit still.

What surprised me most in this assembly was that it was composed partly of nobles and partly of peasants—the latter being decidedly in the majority—and that no trace of antagonism seemed to exist between the two classes. Landed proprietors and their *ci-devant* serfs evidently met for the moment on a footing of equality. The discussions were always carried on by the nobles, but on more than one occasion peasant members rose to speak, and their remarks, always clear, practical, and to the point, were invariably listened to with respectful attention by all present. Instead of that violent antagonism which might have been expected considering the constitution of the assembly, there was a great deal too much unanimity—a fact indicating plainly that the majority of the members did not take a very deep interest in the matters presented to them.

This assembly was held in the month of September. At the beginning of December the Assembly for the Province met, and during nearly three weeks I was daily present at its deliberations. In general character and mode of procedure it resembled closely the District Assembly. Its chief peculiarities were that its members were chosen, not by the primary electors, but by the assemblies of the ten Districts which compose the Province, and that it

took cognizance merely of those matters which concerned more than one District. Besides this, the peasant deputies were very few in number—a fact which somewhat surprised me, because I was aware that, according to the law, the peasant members of the District Assemblies were eligible, like those of the other classes. The explanation is that the District Assemblies choose their most active members to represent them in the Provincial Assemblies, and consequently the choice generally falls on landed proprietors. To this arrangement the peasants make no objection, for attendance at the Provincial Assemblies demands a considerable pecuniary outlay, and payment to the deputies is expressly prohibited by law.

To give the reader an idea of the elements composing this assembly, let me introduce him to a few of the members. A considerable section of them may be described in a single sentence. They are commonplace men, who have spent part of their youth in the public service as officers in the army, or officials in the civil administration, and have since retired to their estates, where they gain a modest competence by farming. Some of them add to their agricultural revenues by acting as justices of the peace. A few may be described more particularly.

You see there, for instance, that fine-looking old general in uniform, with the St. George's Cross at his button-hole—an order given only for bravery in the field. That is Prince S——, a grandson of one of Russia's greatest men. He has filled high posts in the administration without ever tarnishing his name by a dishonest or dishonorable action, and has spent a great part of his life at Court without ceasing to be frank, generous, and truthful. Though he has no intimate knowledge of current affairs, and sometimes gives way a little to drowsiness, his sympathies in disputed points are always on the right side, and when he gets to his feet he always speaks in a clear soldier-like fashion.

The tall gaunt man, somewhat over middle age, who sits a little to the left is Prince W——. He, too, has an historical name, but he cherishes above all things personal independence, and has consequently always kept aloof from the Administration and the Court. The leisure thus acquired he has devoted to study, and he has produced several very valuable works on political and social science. An enthusiastic but at the same time cool-headed abolitionist at the time of the Emancipation, he has since con-

stantly striven to ameliorate the condition of the peasantry by advocating the spread of primary education, the establishment of rural credit associations in the villages, the preservation of the communal institutions, and numerous important reforms in the financial system. Both of these gentlemen, it is said, generously gave to their peasants more land than they were obliged to give by the Emancipation law. In the Assembly Prince W—— speaks frequently, and always commands attention ; and in all important committees he is a leading member. Though a warm defender of the Zemstvo institutions, he thinks that their activity ought to be confined to a comparatively narrow field, and thereby he differs from some of his colleagues, who are ready to embark in hazardous, not to say fanciful, schemes for developing the natural resources of the province. His neighbor, Mr. P——, is one of the most able and energetic members of the assembly. He is president of the executive bureau in one of the Districts, where he has founded many primary schools, and created several rural credit associations on the model of those which bear the name of *Schultze-Delitsch* in Germany. Mr. S——, who sits beside him, was for some years an arbitrator between the proprietors and emancipated serfs, then a member of the Provincial Executive Bureau, and is now director of a bank in St. Petersburg.

To the right and left of the president—who is Marshal of Noblesse for the province—sit the members of the bureau. The gentleman who reads the long reports is my friend “the prime minister,” who began life as a cavalry officer, and after a few years of military service retired to his estate ; he is an intelligent, able administrator, and a man of considerable literary culture. His colleague, who assists him in reading the reports, is a merchant, and director of the municipal bank. His neighbor is also a merchant, and in some respects the most remarkable man in the room. Though born a serf, he is already, at middle age, an important personage in the Russian commercial world. Rumor says that he laid the foundation of his fortune by one day purchasing a copper caldron in a village through which he was passing on his way to St. Petersburg, where he hoped to gain a little money by the sale of some calves. In the course of a few years he amassed an enormous fortune ; but the cautious people think that he is too fond of hazardous speculations, and prophesy that he will end life as poor as he began it.

All these men belong to what may be called the party of progress, which anxiously supports all proposals recognized as "liberal," and especially all measures likely to improve the condition of the peasantry. Their chief opponent is that little man with close-cropped, bullet-shaped head and small piercing eyes, who may be called the leader of the opposition. That gentleman opposes many of the proposed schemes, on the ground that the province is already overtaxed, and that the expenditure ought therefore to be reduced to the smallest possible figure. In the District Assembly he preaches this doctrine with considerable success, for there the peasantry form the majority, and he knows how to use that terse, homely language, interspersed with proverbs, which has far more influence on the rustic mind than scientific principles and logical reasoning; but here, in the Provincial Assembly, his following composes only a respectable minority, and he confines himself to a policy of obstruction.

The Zemstvo of Novgorod has—or at least had at that time—the reputation of being one of the most enlightened and energetic, and I must say that in the assembly of 1870 the proceedings were conducted in a business-like, satisfactory way. The reports were carefully considered, and each article of the annual budget was submitted to minute scrutiny and criticism. In several of the provinces which I afterwards visited I found that affairs were conducted in a very different fashion: quorums were formed with extreme difficulty, and the proceedings, when they at last commenced, were treated as mere formalities and dispatched as speedily as possible. The character of the assembly depends of course on the amount of interest taken in local public affairs. In some districts this interest is considerable; in others it is very near zero.

The reader may perhaps imagine that the Zemstvo has, like the rural commune, grown up slowly in the course of centuries, and is in its present form a remnant of ancient liberties, which has successfully resisted the centralizing tendencies of the autocratic power. In reality it is nothing of the sort. It is a modern institution, created by the autocratic power about ten years ago, and represents the most recent attempt to lighten the duties and correct the abuses of the Imperial administration by means of local self-government.

How came it, then, it may be asked, that the autocratic power,

which is believed to have a superstitious dread of parliamentary institutions, voluntarily created in each District and in each Province an organization which is not only unmistakably parliamentary but extremely democratic? With the view of explaining this curious anomaly I must endeavor to initiate the reader into the mysteries of Russian bureaucratic law-making.

When a minister considers that some institution belonging to his branch of the service requires to be reformed, he presents to the Emperor a formal explanatory report on the subject. If his Majesty adopts the suggestion he orders a commission to be appointed for the purpose of considering the question and forming a definite project. The commission meets, and sets to work in what seems a very thorough way. It first studies the history of the institution in Russia from the earliest times downwards—or rather it listens to an essay on the subject, specially prepared for the occasion by some official who has a taste for historical studies, and can write a pleasant style. The next step—to use a phrase which often occurs in the minutes of such commissions—consists in “shedding the light of science on the question” (*prolit’ na dyelo svet nauki*). This important operation consists in preparing a memorial, containing the history of similar institutions in foreign countries, and an elaborate exposition of numerous theories held by French and German philosophical jurists. In these memorials it is often considered necessary to include every European country except Turkey, and sometimes the small German states and principal Swiss cantons are treated separately.

To illustrate the character of these wonderful productions, let me give an example. From a pile of such papers lying before me I take one almost at random. It is a memorial relating to a proposed reform of benevolent institutions. First, I find a philosophical disquisition on benevolence in general; next, some remarks on the Talmud and the Koran; then a reference to the treatment of paupers in Athens after the Peloponnesian War, and in Rome under the emperors; then some vague observations on the Middle Ages, with a quotation that was evidently intended to be Latin; lastly, comes an account of the poor-laws of modern times, in which I meet with “the Anglo-Saxon domination,” King Egbert, King Ethelred; “a remarkable book of Icelandic laws, called Hragas;” Sweden and Norway, France, Holland, Belgium, Prussia, and nearly all the minor German states. The

most wonderful thing is that all this mass of historical information, extending from the Talmud to the most recent legislation of Hesse-Darmstadt, is compressed into twenty-one octavo pages! The theoretical part of the memorial is not less rich. Many respected names from the literature of Germany, France, and England are forcibly dragged in; and the general conclusion drawn from this mass of raw, undigested materials is believed to be "the latest results of science."

Does the reader suspect that I have here chosen an extremely exceptional case? If so, let us take the next paper in the file. It refers to a project of law regarding imprisonment for debt. On the first page I find references to "the Salic laws of the fifth century," and the "Assises de Jerusalem, A.D. 1099." That, I think, will suffice. An experienced friend at my elbow assures me that the specimen which I have chosen is very characteristic. Let us pass, then, to the next step.

When the quintessence of human wisdom and experience has thus been extracted, the commission considers how the valuable product may be applied to Russia, so as to harmonize with the existing general conditions and local peculiarities. For a man of practical mind this is, of course, the most interesting and most important part of the operation, but from Russian legislators it receives comparatively little attention. Very often have I turned to this section of official papers in order to obtain information regarding the actual state of the country, and in every case I have been grievously disappointed. Vague general phrases, founded on *à priori* reasoning rather than on observation, together with a few statistical tables—which the cautious investigator should avoid as he would an ambuscade—are too often all that is to be found. Through the thin veil of pseudo-erudition the real facts are clear enough. These philosophical legislators, who have spent all their life in the official atmosphere of St. Petersburg, know as much about Russia as the genuine cockney knows about the British Empire, and in this part of their work they derive no assistance from the learned German books which supply an unlimited amount of historical fact and philosophical speculation.

From the commission the project passes to the Council of State, where it is examined, criticised, and perhaps modified, but it is not likely to be thereby much improved, for the members of the council are merely *ci-devant* members of commissions, hardened

by a few additional years of official routine. The Council is, in fact, an assembly of officials who know little of the practical, everyday wants of the unofficial classes. No merchant, manufacturer, or farmer ever enters its sacred precincts, so that its bureaucratic serenity is never disturbed by practical objections.

The commission appointed in 1859 for the purpose of "confering more unity and independence on the local economic administration" proceeded in a less extravagant way than the two commissions just referred to. Though some remarks were made on the earliest period of Russian history, there was no reference to the Talmud and the Koran, and no attempt to define Athenian local administration after the Peloponnesian War. Even the "*Leges Barbarorum*" and the "*Assises de Jerusalem*" were allowed to rest in peace. But the spirit which reigned in the commission was essentially bureaucratic, and the method of procedure was that which I have described. This accounts for many peculiarities of the new institutions.

The law which the commission elaborated was published in January, 1864, and produced inordinate expectations. At that time a large section of the Russian educated classes had a simple, convenient criterion for institutions of all kinds. They assumed as a self-evident axiom that the excellence of an institution must always be in proportion to its "liberal" and democratic character. The question as to how far it might be appropriate to the existing conditions and to the character of the people, and as to whether it might not, though admirable in itself, be too expensive for the work to be performed, was little thought of. Any organization which rested on "the elective principle," and provided an arena for free public discussion, was sure to be well received, and these conditions were fulfilled by the *Zemstvo*.

The expectations excited were of various kinds. People who thought more of political than economic progress saw in the new institutions the basis of boundless popular liberty. If local self-government in England had, in spite of its aristocratic character, created and preserved political liberty, as had been proved by several learned Germans, what might be expected from institutions so much more liberal and democratic? In England there have never been county parliaments, and the local administration has always been in the hands of the great landowners; whilst in Russia every district would have its elective assembly, in which

the peasant would be on a level with the richest landed proprietors. People who were accustomed to think of social rather than political progress expected that the Zemstvo would soon provide the country with good roads, safe bridges, numerous village schools, well-appointed hospitals, and all the other requisites of civilization. Agriculture would be improved, trade and industry developed, and the condition of the peasantry ameliorated. The listless apathy of provincial life and the hereditary indifference to local public affairs were now, it was thought, about to be dispelled; and in view of this change patriotic mothers took their children to the assemblies in order to accustom them from their early years to take an interest in the public welfare.

It is scarcely necessary to say that these inordinate expectations have not been realized. The Government had no intention of conferring on the new institutions any political significance, and very soon showed that it would not allow the assemblies to exert even a moral pressure by means of petitions and political agitation. As soon as the Zemstvo of St. Petersburg gave evidence of a desire to play a political part, the assembly was at once closed by Imperial command, and several of the leading members were banished for a time from the capital.

Even within its proper sphere, as defined by law, the Zemstvo has not accomplished what was expected of it. The country has not been covered with a network of macadamized roads, and the bridges are by no means as safe as could be desired; there are still few village schools, and infirmaries are rarely to be met with. Little or nothing has been done for the development of trade or manufactures; and the villages remain very much what they were under the old administration. Meanwhile the local rates have been rising with alarming rapidity; and many people draw from all this the conclusion that the Zemstvo is a worthless institution which has increased the taxation without conferring any corresponding benefit on the country.*

If we take as our criterion in judging the institution the exaggerated expectations at first entertained, we may feel inclined to agree with this conclusion, but this is merely tantamount to saying that the Zemstvo has performed no miracles. Russia is

*The sum total of the rates for thirty provinces rose in the course of three years from 5,186,302 roubles to 14,569,567 roubles.

much poorer and much less densely populated than the more advanced nations which she takes as her model. To suppose that she could at once create for herself by means of an administrative reform all the conveniences which those more advanced nations enjoy, was as absurd as it would be to imagine that a poor man can at once construct a magnificent palace because he has received from a wealthy neighbor the necessary architectural plans. Not only years but generations must pass before Russia can assume the appearance of Germany, France, or England. The metamorphosis may be accelerated or retarded by good government, but it could not be effected at once, even if the combined wisdom of all the philosophers and statesmen in Europe were employed in legislating for the purpose.

The Zemstvo has, however, done much more than the majority of its critics suppose. In the first place, it fulfills tolerably well its ordinary everyday duties, and is very little tainted with speculation and jobbery. Secondly, it has greatly improved the condition of the hospitals, asylums, and other benevolent institutions committed to its charge; and it has done much, considering the limited means at its disposal, for the spread of popular education by founding village schools and a few seminaries for the preparation of schoolmasters. The seminary near Novgorod I had abundant opportunities of observing, and I can speak of it and of its director, Baron Kosinski, in terms of the highest praise. In the third place, the Zemstvo has created a new and more equitable system of rating, by which the landed proprietors and owners of houses are made to bear their share of the public burdens. Last, and not least, it has created a system of mutual fire insurance for the villagers—a most valuable institution in a country like Russia, where the great majority of the peasants live in wooden houses, and fires are extremely frequent.*

Notwithstanding these important results, it must be confessed that the Zemstvo is at present in a somewhat critical state. It no longer enjoys public confidence, and already shows unmistakable symptoms of exhaustion. This fact is recognized by all; and the best authorities are pretty nearly at one regarding the cause of the phenomenon. The Government, they say, conceived

* In 1868 the combined revenues of the Zemstvos of thirty provinces, comprising a region more than six times as large as Great Britain and Ireland,

in a moment of enthusiasm the project of conferring local self-government on the people, but it afterwards became frightened, and put heavy fetters on the young institution. The assemblies were obliged to accept as presidents the marshals of noblesse. A limit was placed to the taxation of trade and industry, and consequently the mercantile class lost all interest in the proceedings. The publicity which was at first granted to the assemblies was afterwards diminished by giving to the governors of provinces the right to prevent the publication of the minutes and other documents. These restrictions, it is said, have rendered all free, vigorous action impossible.

We have here an explanation which is thoroughly in accordance with Russian conceptions and habits of thought. When anything goes wrong in Russia there is always a tendency to assume that the Government is to blame, and St. Petersburg is expected to supply the remedy. As the Government attempts to control everything, the tendency is perfectly natural, but the explanation to which it gives rise is not wholly satisfactory with regard to the Zemstvo. If it is undeniable that considerable restrictions have been placed on its freedom of action, it is equally undeniable that an institution which succumbs so easily must have very little true vitality in it. In my opinion the cause of that exhaustion and languor which the Zemstvo at present displays lies much deeper, and must be sought in one of the essential peculiarities of Russian

amounted only to about two million pounds sterling. This sum was expended as follows :—

	ROUBLES.	PER CENT.
1. Houses for the police and other members of the Imperial administration -	669,719	= 4.6
2. Quarters for the troops - - -	118,080	= 0.8
3. Means of conveyance for the police and other officials - - -	2,485,973	= 17.0
4. Special administration for peasant affairs	2,160,258	= 14.9
5. Justice of peace courts - - -	1,925,388	= 13.2
6. Roads and bridges - - -	1,906,777	= 13.1
7. Sanitary affairs (physicians, hospitals, &c.)	1,204,162	= 8.3
8. Popular education - - -	738,850	= 5.1
9. Payment of debt and sundries - -	562,991	= 3.8
10. Working expenses of Zemstvo adminis- tration - - - -	2,797,360	= 19.2
	<hr/> 14,569,567	<hr/> 100.0

national life. This may be best explained by contrasting briefly the British and Russian method of creating new institutions.

It is a striking trait of our political life that our institutions have all grown out of real, practical wants, keenly felt by a large section of the population. Cautious and conservative in all that concerns the public welfare, we regard change as a necessary evil, and put off the evil day as long as possible, even when convinced that it must inevitably come. Thus our administrative wants are always in advance of our means of satisfying them, and we always use vigorously those means as soon as they are supplied. Our method of supplying the means, too, is peculiar. Instead of making a *tabula rasa*, and beginning from the foundations, we utilize to the utmost what we happen to possess, and add merely what is absolutely indispensable. Metaphorically speaking, we repair and extend our political edifice according to the changing necessities of our mode of life, without paying much attention to abstract principles or the contingencies of the distant future. The building may be an esthetic monstrosity, belonging to no recognized style of architecture, and built in defiance of the principles laid down by philosophical art critics, but it is well adapted to our requirements, and every hole and corner of it is sure to be utilized.

Very different has been the political history of Russia during the last two centuries. It may be briefly described as a series of revolutions effected peaceably by the autocratic power. Each young energetic sovereign has attempted to inaugurate a new epoch by thoroughly remodeling the administration according to the most approved foreign political philosophy of the time. Institutions have not been allowed to grow spontaneously out of popular wants, but have been invented by bureaucratic theorists to satisfy wants of which the people were still unconscious. The administrative machine has therefore derived little or no motive force from the people, and has always been kept in motion by the unaided energy of the central Government. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the repeated attempts of the Government to lighten the burdens of centralized administration by creating organs of local self-government should have been eminently unsuccessful.

The Zemstvo, it is true, offered better chances of success than any of its predecessors. A large portion of the nobles had become

alive to the necessity of improving the administration, and the popular interest in public affairs was much greater than at any former period. Hence there was at first a period of enthusiasm, during which great preparations were made for future activity, and not a little was actually effected. The institution had all the charm of novelty, and the members felt that the eyes of the public were upon them. For a time all went well, and the Zemstvo was so well pleased with its own activity that the satirical journals compared it to Narcissus admiring his image reflected in the pool. But when the charm of novelty had passed and the public turned its attention to other matters, the spasmodic energy evaporated, and many of the most active members looked about for more lucrative employment. Such employment was easily found, for at that time there was an unusual demand for able, energetic, educated men. Several branches of the civil service were being reorganized, and railways, banks, and joint-stock companies were being rapidly multiplied. With these the Zemstvo had great difficulty in competing. It could not, like the Imperial service, offer pensions, decorations, and prospects of promotion, nor could it pay such large salaries as the commercial and industrial enterprises. In consequence of all this, the quality of the executive bureaus deteriorated at the same time as the public interest in the institution diminished.

It is right to point out this fact, because it has had some influence in producing that languor from which the Zemstvo is at present suffering. It is not, however, the chief cause. The languor has appeared among the deputies and the public quite as much as in the executive committees. The chief cause lies in the fact that very few people feel keenly the want of those things which the Zemstvo is intended to supply. Take, for instance, a matter of first necessity. That good roads are necessary for the development of the national resources is a principle well known to every Russian who has any pretensions to being educated, but very few of the enlightened deputies who occasionally enounce the principle feel the necessity of having good roads in their own district in the same sense as they feel the necessity of having opportunities for card-playing. The one is a theoretical, the other a practical want. When the landed proprietors learn to keep accounts accurately, and discover that a certain amount of money spent on roads will be more than compensated for by the

diminution in the cost of transport, then, and not till then, will the road committees become vigorous institutions. The same remark, *mutatis mutandis*, may be applied to all the other branches of the local self-government.

In order to illustrate the essentially unpractical character of the institution, I cannot do better than describe briefly an incident which I once witnessed in a District Assembly. When the subject of primary schools came before the meeting, an influential member started up, and proposed that an obligatory system of education should be at once introduced throughout the whole District. Strange to say, the motion was very nearly carried, though all the members present knew—or at least might have known if they had taken the trouble to inquire—that the actual number of schools would have to be multiplied twentyfold, and that the local rates were already very heavy. To preserve his reputation for liberalism, the honorable member further proposed that, though the system should be obligatory, no fines, punishments, or other means of compulsion should be employed. How a system could be obligatory without using some means of compulsion, he did not condescend to explain. To get out of this difficulty one of his supporters suggested that peasants who did not send their children to school should be excluded from serving as office-bearers in the communes; but this proposition merely created a laugh, for many deputies knew that the peasants would regard this supposed punishment as a valuable privilege. And whilst this discussion about the necessity of introducing an ideal system of obligatory education was being carried on, the street before the windows of the room was covered with a stratum of mud nearly two feet in depth! The other streets were in a similar condition; and a large number of the members always arrived late, because it was almost impossible to come on foot, and there was only one public conveyance in the town. Many members had, fortunately, their private conveyances, but even in these locomotion was by no means easy. One day, in the principal thoroughfare, a member had his tarantass overturned, and he himself was thrown into the mud!

I might describe many minor defects of the Zemstvo in its present condition, but I think it would be unfair to criticise severely a young institution which is animated with good intentions, and errs chiefly from inexperience. With all its defects

and errors it is infinitely better than the institutions which it replaced. If we compare it with previous attempts to create local self-government, we must admit that the Russians have made great progress in their political education. What its future may be I do not venture to predict. I am inclined to believe that it will outlive its present state of lethargy, and will gradually acquire new, healthy vitality, as the people come to feel more and more the need of those things which it is intended to supply. But, on the other hand, it may possibly die of inanition, or be swept away by some new explosion of reforming enthusiasm before it has had time to strike deep root. Some one has truly said that Time shows little respect to works which have dispensed with its assistance; and nowhere is the saying more frequently exemplified than in Russia, where institutions shoot up like Jonah's gourd, and perish as rapidly, without leaving a trace behind them.

CHAPTER XV.

LANDED PROPRIETORS OF THE OLD SCHOOL.

Russian Hospitality—A Country-House—Its Owner described—His Life, Past and Present—Winter Evenings—Books—Connection with the Outer World—The Crimean War and the Emancipation—A Drunken, Dissolute Proprietor—An old General and his Wife—"Name-days"—A Legendary Monster—A Retired Judge—A Clever Scribe—Social Leniency—Causes of Demoralization.

OF all the foreign countries in which I have traveled Russia certainly bears off the palm in all that regards hospitality. Every spring I found myself in possession of a large number of invitations from landed proprietors in different parts of the country—far more than I could possibly accept—and a great part of the summer was generally spent in wandering about from one country-house to another. I have no intention of asking the reader to accompany me in these expeditions—for, though pleasant in reality, they might be tedious in description—but I wish to convey to him some idea of the Russian landed proprietors, and shall therefore single out for description a few typical specimens of the class.

Among the Russian landed proprietors are to be found nearly all ranks and conditions of men, from the rich magnate, surrounded with all the refined luxury of West-European civilization, to the poor, ill-clad, ignorant owner of a few acres which barely supply him with the necessaries of life. Let us take, first of all, a few specimens from the middle ranks.

In one of the central provinces, near the bank of a sluggish, meandering stream, stands an irregular group of wooden constructions—old, unpainted, blackened by time, and surmounted by high, sloping roofs of moss-covered planks. The principal building is a long, one-storied dwelling-house, constructed at right angles to the road. At the front of the house is a spacious, ill-

kept yard, and at the back an equally spacious shady garden, in which art carries on a feeble conflict with encroaching nature. At the other side of the yard, and facing the front door—or rather the front doors, for there are two—stand the stables, hay-shed, and granary, and near to that end of the house which is furthest from the road are two smaller houses, one of which is the kitchen, and the other the *Lyudskáya*, or servants' apartments. Beyond these we can perceive, through a single row of lime-trees, another group of time-blackened wooden constructions in a still more dilapidated condition. That is the farm-yard.

There is certainly not much symmetry in the disposition of these buildings, but there is nevertheless a certain order and meaning in the apparent chaos. All the buildings which do not require stoves are built at a considerable distance from the dwelling-house and kitchen, which are more liable to take fire; and the kitchen stands by itself, because the odor of cookery where oil is used is by no means agreeable, even for those whose olfactory nerves are not very sensitive. The plan of the house is likewise not without a certain meaning. The rigorous separation of the sexes, which formed a characteristic trait of old Russian society, has long since disappeared, but its influence may still be traced in houses built on the old model. The house in question is one of these, and consequently it is composed of three sections—at the one end the male apartments, at the other the female apartments, and in the middle the neutral territory, comprising the dining-room and the salon. This arrangement has its conveniences, and explains the fact that the house has two front doors. At the back is a third door, which opens from the neutral territory into a spacious veranda overlooking the garden.

Here lives and has lived for many years Ivan Ivanovitch K——, a gentleman of the old school, and a very worthy man of his kind. If we look at him as he sits in his comfortable arm-chair, with his capacious dressing-gown hanging loosely about him, and his long Turkish pipe in his hand, we shall be able to read at a glance something of his character. Nature endowed him with large bones and broad shoulders, and evidently intended him to be a man of great muscular power, but he has contrived to frustrate this benevolent intention, and has now more fat than muscle. His close-cropped head is round as a bullet, and his features are massive and heavy, but the heaviness is relieved by an expression

of calm contentment and imperturbable good-nature, which occasionally blossoms into a broad grin. His face is one of those on which no amount of histrionic talent could produce a look of care and anxiety, and for this it is not to blame, for such an expression has never been demanded of it. Like other mortals he experiences sometimes little annoyances, and on such occasions his small gray eyes sparkle and his face becomes suffused with a crimson glow that suggests apoplexy; but ill-fortune has never been able to get sufficiently firm hold of him to make him understand what such words as care and anxiety mean. Of struggle, disappointment, hope, and all the other feelings which give to human life a dramatic interest, he knows little by hearsay and nothing by experience. He has, in fact, always lived outside of that struggle for existence which modern philosophers declare to be the law of Nature.

Somewhere about sixty years ago Ivan Ivan'itch was born in the house where he still lives. His first lessons he received from the parish priest, and afterward he was taught by a deacon's son, who had studied in the ecclesiastical seminary to so little purpose that he was unable to pass the final examination. By both of these teachers he was treated with extreme leniency, and was allowed to learn as little as he chose. His father wished him to study hard, but his mother was afraid that study might injure his health, and accordingly gave him several holidays every week. Under these circumstances his progress was naturally not very rapid, and he was still very slightly acquainted with the elementary rules of arithmetic, when his father one day declared that he was already eighteen years of age, and must at once enter the service. But what kind of service? Ivan had no natural inclination for any kind of activity. The project of entering him as a "Junker" in a cavalry regiment, the colonel of which was an old friend of his father's, did not at all please him. He had no love for military service, and positively disliked the prospect of an examination. Whilst seeming, therefore, to bow implicitly to the paternal authority, he induced his mother to oppose the scheme.

The dilemma in which Ivan found himself was this: in deference to his father he wished to be in the service and to gain that official rank which every Russian noble desires to possess, and at the same time, in deference to his mother and his own tastes, he wished to remain at home and continue his indolent mode of

life. The Marshal of Noblesse, who happened to call one day, helped him out of the difficulty by offering to inscribe him as secretary in the *Dvoryánskaya Opéka*, a bureau which acts as curator for the estates of minors. All the duties of this office could be fulfilled by a paid secretary, and the nominal occupant would be periodically promoted as if he were an active official. This was precisely what Ivan required. He accepted eagerly the proposal, and obtained, in the course of seven years, without any effort on his part, the rank of "collegiate secretary," corresponding to the "capitaine-en-second" of the military hierarchy. To mount higher he would have had to seek some place where he could not have fulfilled his duty by proxy, so he determined to rest on his easily-won laurels, and sent in his resignation.

Immediately after the termination of his official life his married life began. Before his resignation had been accepted he suddenly found himself one morning on the high road to matrimony. Here again there was no effort on his part. The course of true love, which is said never to run smooth for ordinary mortals, ran smooth for him. He never had even the trouble of proposing. The whole affair was arranged by his parents, who chose as bride for their son the only daughter of their nearest neighbor. The young lady was only about sixteen years of age, and was not remarkable for beauty, talent, or any other peculiarity, but she had one very important qualification—she was the daughter of a man who had an estate contiguous to their own, and who might give as a dowry a certain bit of land which they had long desired to add to their own property. The negotiations, being of a delicate nature, were intrusted to an old lady who had a great reputation for diplomatic skill in such matters, and she accomplished her mission with such success, that in the course of a few weeks the preliminaries were arranged and the day fixed for the wedding. Thus Ivan Ivan'itch won his bride as easily as he had won his *Tchin* of "collegiate secretary."

Though the bridegroom had received rather than taken to himself a wife and did not imagine for a moment that he was in love, he had no reason to regret the choice that was made for him. Maria Petrovna was exactly suited by character and education to be the wife of a man like Ivan Ivan'itch. She had grown up at home in the society of nurses and servant-maids, and had never learned anything more than could be obtained from the parish

priest and from "Ma'mselle," a personage occupying a position midway between a servant-maid and a governess. The first events of her life were the announcement that she was to be married and the preparations for the wedding. All her life afterwards she remembered the delight which the purchase of her trousseau afforded her, and kept in her memory a full catalogue of the articles bought. The first years of her married life were not very happy, for she was treated by her mother-in-law as a naughty child who required to be frequently snubbed and lectured; but she bore the discipline with exemplary patience, and in due time became her own mistress and autocratic ruler in all domestic affairs. From that time she has lived an active, uneventful life. Between her and her husband there is as much mutual attachment as can reasonably be expected in phlegmatic natures after thirty years of matrimony. She devotes all her energies to satisfying his simple material wants—of intellectual wants he has none—and securing his comfort in every possible way. Under this fostering care he has, as he is wont to say, "effeminated himself" (*obábilsya*). His love of hunting and shooting has died out, he cares less and less to visit his neighbors, and each successive year he spends more and more time in his comfortable arm-chair.

The daily life of this worthy couple is singularly regular and monotonous, varying only with the changing seasons. In summer Ivan Ivan'itch gets up about seven o'clock, and puts on, with the assistance of his *valet de chambre*, a simple costume, consisting chiefly of a faded, plentifully-stained dressing-gown. Having nothing particular to do, he sits down at the open window and looks into the yard. As the servants pass he stops and questions them, and then gives them orders, or scolds them, as circumstances demand. Toward nine o'clock tea is announced, and he goes into the dining-room—a long, narrow apartment with bare wooden floor and no furniture but a table and chairs, all in a more or less rickety condition. Here he finds his wife with the tea-urn before her. In a few minutes the younger children come in, kiss their papa's hand, and take their places round the table. As this morning meal consists merely of bread and tea, it does not last long; and all disperse to their several occupations. The head of the house begins the labors of the day by resuming his seat at the open window and having his Turkish pipe filled and lighted by a boy whose special function is to keep his master's pipes in order.

When he has smoked two or three pipes and indulged in a proportionate amount of silent contemplation, he goes out with the intention of visiting the stables and farmyard, but generally before he has crossed the court he finds the heat unbearable, and returns to his former position by the open window. Here he sits tranquilly till the sun has so far moved round that the veranda at the back of the house is completely in the shade, when he has his arm-chair removed thither, and sits there till dinner-time.

Maria Petrovna spends her morning in a more active way. As soon as the breakfast-table has been cleared, she goes to the larder, takes stock of the provisions, arranges the *menu du jour*, and gives to the cook the necessary materials, with detailed instructions as to how they are to be prepared. The rest of the morning she devotes to her other household duties.

Towards one o'clock dinner is announced, and Ivan Ivan'itch prepares his appetite by swallowing at a gulp a wine-glassful of home-made bitters. Dinner is the great event of the day. The food is abundant and of good quality, but mushrooms, onions, and fat play a rather too important part in the repast, and the whole is prepared with very little attention to the recognized principles of culinary hygiene. Many of the dishes, indeed, would make a British valetudinarian stand aghast, but they seem to produce no bad effect on those Russian organisms which have never been weakened by town life, nervous excitement, or intellectual exertion.

No sooner has the last dish been removed than a deathlike stillness falls upon the house ; it is the time of the after-dinner siesta. The young folks go into the garden, and all the other members of the household give way to the drowsiness naturally engendered by a heavy meal on a hot summer day. Ivan Ivan'itch retires to his own room, from which the flies have been carefully expelled by his pipe-bearer. Maria Petrovna dozes in an arm-chair in the sitting-room, with a pocket-handkerchief spread over her face. The servants snore in the corridors, the garret, or the hayshed ; and even the old watch-dog in the corner of the yard stretches himself out at full length on the shady side of his kennel.

In about two hours the house gradually re-awakens. Doors begin to creak ; the names of various servants are bawled out in all tones, from bass to falsetto ; and footsteps are heard in the yard. Soon a man-servant issues from the kitchen, bearing an

enormous tea-urn, which puffs like a little steam-engine. The family assemble for tea. In Russia, as elsewhere, sleep after a heavy meal produces thirst, so that the tea and other beverages are very acceptable. Then some little delicacies are served—such as fruit and wild berries, or cucumbers with honey, or something else of the kind, and the family again disperses. Ivan Ivan'itch takes a turn in the fields on his *begovuiya droshti*—an extremely light vehicle, composed of two pairs of wheels joined together by a single board, on which the driver sits stride-legged; and Maria Petrovna probably receives a visit from the Popadyà (the priest's wife), who is the chief gossipmonger of the neighborhood. There is not much scandal in the district, but what little there is the Popadyà carefully collects, and distributes among her acquaintances with indiscriminating generosity.

In the evening it often happens that a little group of peasants come into the court, and ask to see the "master." The master goes to the door, and generally finds that they have some favor to request. In reply to his question, "Well, children, what do you want?" they tell their story in a confused, rambling way, several of them speaking at a time, and he has to question and cross-question them before he comes to understand clearly what they desire. If he tells them he cannot grant it, they probably do not accept a first refusal, but endeavor by means of supplication to make him reconsider his decision. Stepping forward a little, and bowing low, one of the group begins in a half-respectful, half-familiar, caressing tone—"Little father, Ivan Ivan'itch, be gracious; you are our father, and we are your children"—and so on. Ivan Ivan'itch good-naturedly listens, and again explains that he cannot grant what they ask, but they have still hopes of gaining their point by entreaty, and continue their supplications till at last his patience is exhausted and he says to them in a paternal tone, "Now, enough! enough! you are blockheads—blockheads all round! there's no use talking, it can't be done." And with these words he enters the house, so as to prevent all further discussion.

A regular part of the evening's occupation is the interview with the steward. The work that has just been done, and the programme for the morrow, are always discussed at great length; and much time is spent in speculating as to the weather during the next few days. On this latter point the calendar is always care-

fully consulted, and great confidence is placed in its predictions, though past experience has often shown that they are not to be implicitly trusted. The conversation drags on till supper is announced, and immediately after that meal, which is an abridged repetition of dinner, all retire for the night.

Thus pass the days, and weeks, and months, in the house of Ivan Ivan'itch, and rarely is there any deviation from the ordinary programme. The climate necessitates, of course, some slight modifications. When it is cold, the doors and windows have to be kept shut, and after heavy rains, those who do not like to wade in mud have to remain in the house or garden. In the long winter evenings the family assemble in the sitting-room, and all kill time as they best can. Ivan Ivan'itch smokes his long pipe, and meditates, or listens to the barrel-organ played by one of the children. Maria Petrovna knits a stocking. The old aunt, who commonly spends the winter with them, plays *Patience*, and sometimes draws from the game conclusions as to the future. Her favorite predictions are that a stranger will arrive, or that a marriage will take place, and she can determine the sex of the stranger and the color of the bridegroom's hair; but beyond this her art does not go, and she cannot satisfy the young ladies' curiosity as to further details.

Books and newspapers are rarely seen in the sitting-room, but for those who wish to read, there is a book-case full of miscellaneous literature, which gives some idea of the literary tastes of the family during several generations. The oldest volumes were bought by Ivan Ivan'itch's grandfather—a man who, according to the family traditions, enjoyed the confidence of the great Catherine. Though wholly overlooked by recent historians, he was evidently a man who had some pretensions to culture. He had his portrait painted by a foreign artist of considerable talent—it still hangs in the sitting-room—and he bought several pieces of Sèvres ware, the last of which stands on a commode in the corner and contrasts strangely with the rude home-made furniture and squalid appearance of the apartment. Among the books which bear his name are the tragedies of Sumarókof, who imagined himself to be “the Russian Voltaire;” the amusing comedies of Von-Wisin, some of which still keep the stage; the loud-sounding odes of the courtly Derzhávin; two or three books containing the mystic wisdom of Freemasonry as interpreted by Schwarz and Novikoff; Russian translations of Richardson's “*Pamela*,” “*Sir Charles Grandi-*

son" and "Clarissa Harlowe;" Rousseau's "Nouvelle Héloïse," in Russian garb; and three or four volumes of Voltaire in the original. Among the works collected at a somewhat later period are translations of Ann Radcliffe, of Scott's early novels, and of Ducray Duménil, whose stories, "Lolotte et Fanfan" and "Victor" once enjoyed a great reputation. At this point the literary tastes of the family appear to have died out, for the succeeding literature is represented exclusively by Kryloff's Fables, a farmer's manual, a hand-book of family medicine, and a series of calendars. There are, however, some signs of a revival, for on the lowest shelf stand recent editions of Pushkin, Lérmonof, and Gógol, and a few works by living authors.

Sometimes the monotony of the winter is broken by visiting neighbors and receiving visitors in return, or in a more decided way by a visit of a few days to the capital of the province. In the latter case Maria Petrovna spends nearly all her time in shopping, and brings home a large collection of miscellaneous articles. The inspection of these by the assembled family forms an important domestic event, which completely throws into the shade the occasional visits of peddlers and colporteurs. Then there are the festivities at Christmas and Easter, and occasionally little incidents of a less agreeable kind. It may be that there is a heavy fall of snow, so that it is necessary to cut roads to the kitchen and stables; or wolves enter the courtyard at night and have a fight with the watch-dogs; or the news is brought that a peasant who had been drinking in a neighboring village has been found frozen to death on the road.

Altogether the family live a very isolated life, but they have one bond of connection with the great outer world. Two of the sons are officers in the army, and both of them write home occasionally to their mother and sisters. To these two youths is devoted all the little stock of sentimentality which Maria Petrovna possesses. She can talk of them by the hour to any one who will listen to her, and has related to the Popadyà a hundred times every trivial incident of their lives. Though they have never given her much cause for anxiety, she lives in constant fear that some evil may befall them. What she most fears is that they may be sent on a campaign or may fall in love with actresses. War and actresses are in fact the two bugbears of her existence, and whenever she has a disquieting dream she asks the priest to

offer up a *molében* for the safety of her absent ones. Sometimes she ventures to express her anxiety to her husband, and recommends him to write to them; but he considers writing a letter a very serious bit of work, and always replies, evasively, "Well, well, we must think about it."

During the Crimean War—though the two sons were not yet in the army—Ivan Ivan'itch half awoke from his habitual lethargy, and read occasionally the meagre official reports published by the Government. He was a little surprised that no great victories were reported, and that the army did not at once advance on Constantinople. As to causes he never speculated. Some of his neighbors told him that the army was disorganized, and the whole system of Nicholas had been proved to be utterly worthless. That might all be very true, but he did not understand military and political matters. No doubt it would all come right in the end. All did come right, after a fashion, and he again gave up reading newspapers; but ere long he was startled by reports much more alarming than any rumors of war. People began to talk about the peasant question, and to say openly that the serfs must soon be emancipated. For once in his life Ivan Ivan'itch asked explanations. Finding one of his neighbors, who had always been a respectable, sensible man, and a severe disciplinarian, talking in this way, he took him aside and asked what it all meant. The neighbor explained that the old order of things had shown itself bankrupt, and was doomed, that a new epoch was opening, that everything was to be reformed, and that the Emperor, in accordance with a secret clause of the Treaty with the Allies, was about to grant a Constitution! Ivan Ivan'itch listened for a little in silence, and then, with a gesture of impatience, interrupted the speaker: "Polno durátchitsya! enough of fun and tomfoolery. Vassili Petrovitch, tell me seriously what you mean."

When Vassili Petrovitch vowed that he spoke in all seriousness, his friend gazed at him with a look of intense compassion, and remarked, as he turned away, "So you, too, have gone out of your mind!"

The utterances of Vassili Petrovitch, which his lethargic, sober-minded friend regarded as indicating temporary insanity in the speaker, represented fairly the mental condition of very many Russian nobles at that time, and were not without a certain foundation. The idea about a secret clause in the Treaty of Paris

was purely imaginary, but it was quite true that the country was entering on an epoch of great reforms, among which the Emancipation question occupied the chief place. Of this even the skeptical Ivan Ivan'itch was soon convinced. The Emperor formally declared to the noblesse of the province of Moscow that the actual state of things could not continue for ever, and called on the landed proprietors to consider by what means the condition of their serfs might be ameliorated. Provincial committees were formed for the purpose of preparing definite projects, and gradually it became apparent that the Emancipation of the serfs was really at hand.

Ivan Ivan'itch was somewhat alarmed at the prospect of losing his authority over his serfs. Though he had never been a cruel task-master, he had not spared the rod when he considered it necessary, and he believed birch-twigs to be a necessary instrument in the Russian system of agriculture. For some time he drew consolation from the thought that peasants were not birds of the air, that they must under all circumstances require food and clothing, and that they would be ready to serve him as agricultural laborers; but when he learned that they were to receive a large part of the estate for their own use, his hopes fell, and he greatly feared that he would be inevitably ruined.

These dark forebodings have not been by any means realized. His serfs have been emancipated and have received about a half of the estate, but in return for the land ceded they pay him annually a considerable sum, and they are always ready to cultivate his fields for a fair remuneration. The yearly outlay is now considerably greater, but the price of grain has risen, and this quite counterbalances the additional yearly expenditure. The administration of the estate is much less patriarchal; much that was formerly left to custom and tacit understanding is now regulated by express agreement on purely commercial principles; a great deal more money is paid out and a great deal more received; there is much less authority in the hands of the master, and his responsibilities are proportionately diminished; but in spite of all these changes, Ivan Ivan'itch would have great difficulty in deciding whether he is a richer or a poorer man. He has fewer horses and fewer servants, but he has still more than he requires, and his mode of life has undergone no perceptible alteration. Maria Petrovna complains that she is no longer supplied

with eggs, chickens, and home-spun linen by the peasants, and everything is three times as dear as it used to be; but somehow the larder is still full, and abundance reigns in the house as of old.

Ivan Ivan'itch does certainly not possess transcendent qualities of any kind. It would be impossible to make a hero out of him, even though his own son should be his biographer. Muscular Christians may reasonably despise him, and active, energetic men may fairly condemn him for his indolence and apathy. But on the other hand he has no very bad qualities. His vices are of the passive, negative kind. He is a respectable if not distinguished member of society, and appears a very worthy man when compared with many of his neighbors who have been brought up in similar conditions. Take, for instance, his younger brother Dimítri, who lives a short way off.

Dimítri Ivanovitch, like his brother Ivan, had been endowed by Nature with a very decided repugnance to prolonged intellectual exertion, but as he was a man of good parts he did not fear a junker's examination—especially when he could count on the colonel's protection—and accordingly entered the army. In his regiment were a number of jovial young officers like himself, always ready to relieve the monotony of garrison life by a little boisterous dissipation, and among these he easily acquired the reputation of being a thoroughly good fellow. In drinking-bouts he could hold his own with the best of them, and in all mad pranks invariably played the chief part. By this means he endeared himself to his comrades, and for a time all went well. The colonel had himself sown wild oats plentifully in his youth, and was quite disposed to overlook, as far as possible, the bacchanalian peccadilloes of his subordinates. But before many years had passed, the regiment suddenly changed its character. Certain rumors had reached head-quarters, and the Emperor Nicholas appointed as colonel a stern disciplinarian of German origin, who aimed at making the regiment a kind of machine that should work with the accuracy of a chronometer. This change did not at all suit the tastes and habits of Dimítri Ivan'itch. He chafed under the restraints of the new régime, and as soon as he had gained the rank of lieutenant retired from the service to enjoy the freedom of country life. Shortly afterwards his father died, and he thereby became owner of an estate, with two hundred serfs.

He did not, like his elder brother, marry, and "effeminate himself," but he did worse. In his little independent kingdom—for such was practically a Russian estate in the good old times which have recently come to an end—he was lord of all he surveyed, and gave full scope to his boisterous humor, his passion for sport, and his love of drinking and dissipation. Many of the mad pranks in which he indulged will long be preserved by popular tradition, but they cannot well be related here.

D.mítiri Ivan'itch is now a man past middle age, and still continues his wild, dissipated life. His house resembles an ill-kept, disreputable tavern. The floor is filthy, the furniture chipped and broken, the servants indolent, slovenly, and in rags. Dogs of all breeds and sizes roam about the rooms and corridors. The master, when not asleep, is always in a more or less complete state of intoxication. Generally he has one or two guests staying with him—men of the same type as himself—and days and nights are spent in drinking and card-playing. When he cannot have his usual boon-companions he sends for one or two small proprietors who live near—men who are legally nobles, but who are so poor that they differ little from peasants. When ordinary resources fail he occasionally has recourse to the violent expedient of ordering his servants to stop the first passing travelers, whoever they may be, and bring them in by persuasion or force, as circumstances may demand. The travelers may be in the greatest hurry, or they may have the most decided repugnance to accepting such rough, undesired hospitality, but all their excuses, protestations, and remonstrances will be in vain. A wheel will be taken off their tarantass, or some indispensable part of the harness will be secreted, and they may consider themselves fortunate if they succeed in getting away next morning.*

In the time of serfage the domestic serfs had much to bear from their capricious, violent master. They lived in an atmosphere of abusive language, and were subjected not unfrequently to corporal punishment. Worse than this, their master was constantly threat-

* This custom has fortunately become now very rare; it is still, however, occasionally practiced in outlying districts. An incident of the kind happened to a friend of mine in 1871. He was detained against his will for two whole days by a man whom he had never seen before, and at last effected his escape by bribing the servants of his tyrannical host.

ening to "shave their forehead"—that is to say, to give them as recruits—and occasionally he put his threat into execution, in spite of the wailings and entreaties of the culprit and his relations. And yet, strange to say, nearly all of them remained with him as free servants after the Emancipation, and will probably remain with him till he is ejected by his creditors or carried off by a stroke of apoplexy. What will become of them then it is difficult to say, for they have acquired habits which render them unfit for any other kind of life.

In justice to the Russian landed proprietors I must say that the class represented by Dimítri Ivan'itch is now very small, and is steadily decreasing in number. It was the natural result of serfage and social stagnation—of a state of society in which there were few legal and moral restraints, and few inducements to honorable activity.

Among the other landed proprietors of the district, one of the best known is Nicolai Petróvitch B——, an old military man with the rank of general. Like Ivan Ivan'itch, he belongs to the old school; but the two men must be contrasted rather than compared. The difference in their lives and characters is reflected in their outward appearance. Ivan Ivan'itch, as we know, is portly in form and heavy in all his movements, and loves to loll in his arm-chair or to loaf about the house in a capacious dressing-gown. The General, on the contrary, is thin, wiry, and muscular, wears habitually a close-buttoned military tunic, and always has a stern expression, the force of which is considerably augmented by a bristly moustache resembling a shoe-brush. As he paces up and down the room, knitting his brows and gazing at the floor, he looks as if he were forming combinations of the first magnitude; but those who know him well are aware that this is an optical delusion, of which he is himself to some extent a victim. He is quite innocent of deep thought and concentrated intellectual effort. Though he frowns so fiercely he is by no means of a naturally ferocious temperament. Had he passed all his life in the country he would probably have been as good-natured and phlegmatic as Ivan Ivan'itch himself, but, unlike that worshipper of tranquillity, he had aspired to rise in the service, and had adopted the stern, formal bearing which the Emperor Nicholas considered indispensable in an officer. The manner which he had at first put on as part of his uniform became by the force of habit almost a

part of his nature, and at the age of thirty he was an officer after the Iron Emperor's own heart : a stern disciplinarian and uncompromising formalist, who confined his attention exclusively to drill and other military duties. Thus he rose steadily by his own merit, and reached the goal of his early ambition—the rank of general. As soon as this point was reached he determined to leave the service and retire to his estate. Many considerations urged him to take this step. He was already sixty years of age, and had little prospect of further advancement. He enjoyed the title of Excellency which he had long coveted, and when he put on his full uniform his breast was bespangled with medals and decorations. Since the death of his father the revenues of his estate had been steadily decreasing, and report said that the best wood in his forest was rapidly disappearing. His wife had no love for the country, and would have preferred to settle in Moscow or St. Petersburg, but they found that with their small income they could not live in a large town in a style suitable to their rank.

The General determined to introduce order into his estate, and became a practical farmer ; but a little experience convinced him that his new functions were much more difficult than the commanding of a regiment. He has long since given over the practical management of his estate to a steward, who was formerly one of his serfs, and he contents himself with exercising what he imagines to be an efficient control. Though he wishes to do much, he finds small scope for his activity, and spends his days in pretty much the same way as Ivan Ivan'itch, with this difference, that he plays cards whenever he gets an opportunity, and reads regularly the "*Russki Invalid*," the official military paper. As soon as he receives the current number of this paper he sits down and reads it conscientiously from beginning to end. The part which specially interests him is the list of promotions, retirements, and Imperial rewards for merit and seniority. When he sees the announcement that some old comrade has been made an officer of his Majesty's suite or has received a Grand Cordon, he frowns a little more than usual, and is tempted to regret that he retired from the service. Had he waited patiently, perhaps a bit of good fortune might have fallen likewise to his lot. This idea takes possession of him, and during the remainder of the day he is more taciturn than usual. His wife notices the change, and knows the reason

of it, but has too much good sense and tact to make any allusion to the subject.

Anna Alexándrovna, so the good lady is called, is a buxom dame of nearly fifty years of age, who does not at all resemble the wife of Ivan Ivan'itch. She has been long accustomed to a numerous military society, with dinner-parties, dancing, promenades, card-playing, and all the other amusements of garrison life. For domestic concerns she has no taste. Her knowledge of culinary affairs is extremely vague, and she has no idea of how to make preserves, *nalivka*, and other home-made delicacies, though Maria Petrovna, who is universally acknowledged to be a great adept in such matters, has proposed a hundred times to give her some choice recipes. In short, domestic affairs are a burden to her, and she intrusts them as far as possible to the housekeeper. Her young children, too, are somewhat of an incumbrance, and accordingly she relegates them to the care of the nurse and the governess. Altogether she finds country life very tiresome, but, possessing that placid, philosophical temperament which seems to have some causal connection with corpulence, she submits without murmuring, and tries to lighten a little the unavoidable monotony by paying visits and receiving visitors. The neighbors within a radius of twenty miles are, with few exceptions, more or less of the Ivan Ivan'itch and Maria Petrovna type—decidedly rustic in their manners and conceptions; but their company is better than absolute solitude, and they have at least the good quality of being always able and willing to play cards for any number of hours. Besides this, Anna Alexándrovna has the satisfaction of feeling that amongst them she is almost a great personage, and unquestionably an authority in all matters of taste and fashion; and she feels especially well disposed towards those of them who frequently address her as “Your Excellency.”

The chief festivities take place on the “name-days” of the General and his spouse—that is to say, the days sacred to St. Nicholas and St. Anna. On these occasions all the neighbors come to offer their congratulations, and remain to dinner as a matter of course. After dinner the older visitors sit down to cards, and the young people extemporize a dance. The fête is specially successful when the eldest son comes home to take part in it, and brings one or two of his comrades with him. He has been already some years in the army, and is on the road to being

a general like his father.* One of the comrades is expected soon to offer his hand to Olga Nikola'vna, the second daughter, a fair-haired, pale-faced young lady, who is always in a state of languor bordering on collapse. She and her elder sister, a young person of the same temperament, were educated in one of the great "Instituts"—gigantic boarding-schools, founded and kept up by the Government, for the daughters of those who are supposed to have deserved well of their country. Having now finished their education, they live at home, bewailing the absence of "civilized" society, and killing time in a harmless, elegant way by means of music, needlework, and light literature.

At those "name-day" gatherings one is sure to meet several interesting specimens of the old school. One of the most conspicuous guests is a tall corpulent old man, in a threadbare frock-coat, which wrinkles up about his waist. His shaggy eyebrows almost cover his small dull eyes, his heavy moustache partially conceals a large mouth, strongly indicating sensuous tendencies. His hair is cut so short that it is difficult to say what its color would be if it were allowed to grow. He always arrives in his tarantass just in time for the "zakuska"—the appetizing collation that is served shortly before dinner—grunts out a few congratulations to the host and hostess and monosyllabic greetings to his acquaintances, eats a copious meal, and immediately afterwards places himself at a card-table, where he sits in silence so long as he can get any one to play with him. People do not like, however, to play with Andrei Vassil'itch, for his society is not agreeable, and he always contrives to go home with a well-filled purse.

Andrei Vassil'itch is a noted man in the neighborhood. He is the center of a whole cycle of legends, and his name, it is said, is often used with effect by nurses to frighten naughty children. Thus any one who will take the trouble to visit the district of X—may still see a legendary monster in the flesh. How far the numerous stories told about him are true I cannot pretend to say, but they are certainly not without foundation. In his youth he served for some time in the army, and was celebrated, even in an age when martinets had always a good chance of promotion,

* Generals are much more common in Russia than in other countries. A few years ago there was an old lady in Moscow who had a family of ten sons, all of whom were generals! The rank may be obtained in the civil as well as the military service.

for his brutality to his subordinates. His career was cut short, however, when he had only the rank of captain. Having compromised himself in some way, he found it advisable to send in his resignation and retire to his estate. Here he organized his house on Mahometan rather than on Christian principles, and ruled his servants and peasants as he had been accustomed to rule his soldiers—using corporal punishment in merciless fashion. His wife did not venture to protest against the Mahometan arrangements, and any peasant who stood in the way of their realization was at once given as a recruit, or transported to Siberia, in accordance with his master's demand.* At last his tyranny and extortion drove his serfs to revolt. One night his house was surrounded and set on fire, but he contrived to escape the fate that was prepared for him, and caused all who had taken part in the revolt to be mercilessly punished. This was a severe lesson, but it had no effect upon him. Taking precautions against a similar surprise, he continued to tyrannize and extort as before, until in 1861 the serfs were emancipated, and his authority came to an end.

A very different sort of man is Pavel Trophim'itch, who likewise comes regularly to pay his respects and present his congratulations to the General and "Gheneralsha."† It is pleasant to turn from the hard, wrinkled, morose features of the legendary monster and look at the soft, smooth, jovial face of this man, who has always been accustomed to look at the bright side of things, till his face has caught something of their brightness. "A good, jovial, honest face!" you involuntarily exclaim as you look at him. True; but you must beware of drawing from it hasty conclusions as to the character of the owner. Jovial he certainly is, for few men are more capable of making and enjoying mirth. Good he may be also called, if the word be taken in the sense of good-natured, for he never takes offense, and is always ready to do a kindly action if it does not cost him any trouble. But as to his honesty, that requires some qualification. Wholly untarnished his reputation certainly cannot be, for he was for

* When a proprietor considered any of his serfs unruly he could, according to law, have them transported to Siberia without trial, on condition of paying the expenses of transport. Arrived at their destination, they received land, and lived as free colonists, with the single restriction that they were not allowed to leave the locality where they were settled.

† The female form of the word General.

many years a judge in the District Court, and the court to which he belonged was no better than other courts of the same kind. To be a judge in those courts—which were abolished about ten years ago—and to be at the same time an honest man required most unusual moral stamina. Pavel Trophim'itch was not a Cato, and accordingly succumbed. He had never studied law, and made no pretensions to the possession of great legal knowledge. To all who would listen to him he declared openly that he knew much more about pointers and setters than about legal formalities. But his estate was very small, and he could not afford to give up his appointment. Though the nominal salary was extremely modest, the actual revenue was considerable, for in those days no sane man attempted to carry on a suit without greasing the palms of the officials. Both parties paid the secretary, whose duty it was to get up the case and present it to the judges, and the secretary gave a share of these earnings to his superiors. Pavel Trophim'itch was by no means a judge of the worst kind. He had been known to protect widows and orphans against those who wished to despoil them, and no amount of money from the other party would induce him to give an unjust decision against a friend who had privately explained the case to him ; but when he knew nothing of the case or of the parties he readily signed the decision prepared by the secretary, and quietly pocketed the proceeds, without feeling any very disagreeable twinges of conscience. All judges, he knew, did likewise, and he had no pretension to being better than his fellows.

When Pavel Trophim'itch plays cards at the General's house or elsewhere, a small, awkward, clean-shaven man, with dark eyes and a Tartar cast of countenance, may generally be seen sitting at the same table. That is Alexei Petróvitch T——. Whether he really has any Tartar blood in him it is impossible to say, but certainly his ancestors for one or two generations were all good orthodox Christians. His father was a poor military surgeon in a marching regiment, and he himself became at an early age a scribe in one of the bureaus of the district town. He was then very poor, and had great difficulty in supporting life on the miserable pittance which he received as a salary, but he was a sharp, clever youth, and soon discovered that even a scribe had a great many opportunities of extorting money from the ignorant public. These opportunities he used with great ability, and became known as one

of the most accomplished bribe-takers (*vzyátotchniki*) in the district. His position, however, was so very subordinate that he would never have become rich had he not fallen upon a very ingenious expedient which completely succeeded. Hearing that a small proprietor, who had an only daughter, had come to live in the town for a few weeks, he took a room in the inn where the new-comers lived, and when he had made their acquaintance he fell dangerously ill. Feeling his last hours approaching, he sent for a priest, confided to him that he had amassed a large fortune, and requested that a will should be drawn up. In the will he bequeathed large sums to all his relations, and a considerable sum to the parish church. The whole affair was to be kept a secret till after his death, but his neighbor—the old gentleman with the daughter—was called in to act as a witness. When all this had been done he did not die, but rapidly recovered, and now induced the old gentleman, to whom he had confided his secret, to grant him his daughter's hand. The daughter had no objections to marry a man possessed of such wealth, and the marriage was duly celebrated. Shortly after this the father died—without discovering, it is to be hoped, the hoax that had been perpetrated—and Alexei Petrovitch became virtual possessor of a very comfortable little estate. With the change in his fortunes he completely changed his principles, or at least his practice. In all his dealings he is now strictly honest. He lends money, it is true, at from ten to fifteen per cent., but that is considered in these parts not a very exorbitant rate of interest, and all admit that he is never unnecessarily hard upon his creditors. In the elective local administration he plays a prominent part. Though he rarely speaks in the *Zemstvo* assembly, he is a most useful man in committees, and always distinguishes himself by his sound common sense and his wide practical knowledge.

It may seem strange that an honorable man like the General should receive in his house such a motley company, comprising men of decidedly tarnished reputation, but in this respect he is not at all peculiar. One constantly meets in Russian society persons who are known to have been guilty of flagrant dishonesty, and we find that men who are themselves honorable enough associate with them on friendly terms. This social leniency, moral laxity, or whatever else it may be called, is the result of various causes. Several concurrent influences tended to lower the moral standard

of the noblesse. Formerly, when the noble lived on his estate, he could play with impunity the petty tyrant, and could freely indulge his legitimate and illegitimate caprices without any legal or moral restraint. I do not at all mean to assert that all proprietors abused their authority, but I venture to say that no class of men can long possess such enormous arbitrary power over those around them without being thereby more or less demoralized. When the noble entered the service he had not the same immunity from restraint—on the contrary, his position resembled rather that of the serf—but he breathed an atmosphere of peculation and jobbery, little conducive to moral purity and uprightness. If an official had refused to associate with those who were tainted with the prevailing vices, he would have found himself completely isolated, and would have been ridiculed as a modern Don Quixote. Add to this that all classes of the Russian people have a certain kindly, apathetic good-nature which makes them very charitable toward their neighbors, and that they do not always distinguish between forgiving private injury and excusing public crimes. If we bear all this in mind we may readily understand that in the time of serfage and maladministration a man could be guilty of very reprehensible practices without incurring social excommunication.

When serfage was being abolished and the administration was undergoing radical reforms, at the commencement of the present reign, a strong, healthy public opinion suddenly sprang into existence. For a time society reveled in virtuous indignation against the prevailing abuses, and placed on the pillory the most prominent delinquents. The effect of that outburst is still felt, for many things which would have passed unnoticed thirty years ago would now be branded with public infamy; but the intensity of the moral feeling has declined, and there are now unmistakable symptoms that at least a part of the old apathy is gradually returning. This might have been predicted by any one well acquainted with the character and past history of the Russian people. Russia advances on the road of progress, not in that smooth, gradual, prosaic way to which we are accustomed, but by a series of unconnected, frantic efforts, each of which is naturally followed by a period of temporary exhaustion.

CHAPTER XVI.

PROPRIETORS OF THE MODERN SCHOOL.

A Russian *petit maître*—His House and Surroundings—Abortive Attempts to improve Agriculture and the condition of the Serfs—A Comparison—A "Liberal" Tchinovnik—His Idea of Progress—A Justice of the Peace—His Opinion of Russian Literature, Tchinovniks, and *petits maîtres*—His supposed and real Character—An extreme Radical—Disorders in the Universities—Administrative Procedure—Russia's capacity for accomplishing Political and Social Evolution—A Court Dignitary in his Country House.

IN the district in which Nikolai Petróvitch lives the resident landed-proprietors are, for the most part, as I have said, men of the old school, decidedly rustic in their manners and conceptions. But there are a few exceptions, and among the most conspicuous of these is Victor Alexandr'itch L—. As we approach his house we can at once perceive that he differs from the majority of his neighbors. The gate is painted and moves easily on its hinges, the fence is in good repair, the short avenue leading up to the front door is well kept, and in the garden we can perceive at a glance that more attention is paid to flowers than to vegetables. The house is of wood, and not large, but it has some architectural pretensions in the form of a great, pseudo-Doric wooden portico that covers three-fourths of the façade. In the interior we remark everywhere the influence of Western civilization. Victor Alexandr'itch is by no means richer than Ivan Ivan'itch, but his rooms are much more luxuriously furnished. The furniture is of a lighter model, more comfortable, and in a much better state of preservation. Instead of the bare, scantily furnished sitting-room, with the old-fashioned barrel-organ which played only six airs, we find an elegant drawing-room, with a piano by one of the most approved makers, and numerous articles of foreign manufacture, comprising a small buhl table and two bits of genuine old wedge-wood. The servants are clean, and dressed in European costume.

The master, too, is very different in appearance. He pays great attention to his toilet, wearing a dressing-gown only in the early morning, and a fashionable lounging coat during the rest of the day. The Turkish pipes which his grandfather loved he holds in abhorrence, and habitually smokes cigarettes. With his wife and daughters he always speaks French, and calls them by French or English names. But the part of the house which most strikingly illustrates the difference between the old and new styles is "*le cabinet de monsieur*." In the cabinet of Ivan Ivan'itch the furniture consists of a broad sofa which serves as a bed, a few deal chairs, a long range of pipes, and a clumsy deal table, on which are generally to be found a bundle of greasy papers, an old chipped ink-bottle, a pen, and a calendar. The cabinet of Victor Alexandr'itch has an entirely different appearance. It is small, but at once comfortable and elegant. The principal objects which it contains are a library-table, with ink-stand, *presse-papier*, paper-cutters, and other articles in keeping, and in the opposite corner a large bookcase. The collection of books is remarkable, not from the number of volumes or the presence of rare editions, but from the variety of the subjects. History, art, fiction, the drama, political economy, and agriculture are represented in about equal proportions. Some of the works are in Russian, others in German, a large number in French, and a few in Italian. The collection illustrates the former life and present occupations of the owner.

The father of Victor Alexandr'itch was a landed proprietor, who had made a successful career in the civil service, and desired that his son should follow the same profession. For this purpose Victor was first carefully trained at home, and then sent to the University of Moscow, where he spent four years as a student of law. From the University he passed to the Ministry of the Interior in St. Petersburg, but he found the monotonous routine of official life not at all suited to his taste, and very soon sent in his resignation. The death of his father had made him proprietor of an estate, and thither he retired, hoping to find there plenty of occupation more congenial than the writing of official papers.

At the University of Moscow he had attended the lectures of the famous Granófski, and had got through a large amount of desultory reading. The chief result of his studies was the acquisition of many ill-digested general principles, and certain vague,

generous, humanitarian aspirations. With this intellectual capital he hoped to lead a useful life in the country. When he had repaired and furnished the house he set himself to improve the estate. In the course of his promiscuous reading he had stumbled on some descriptions of English and Tuscan agriculture, and had there learned what wonders might be effected by a rational system of farming. Why should not Russia follow the example of England and Tuscany? By proper drainage, plentiful manure, good plows, and the cultivation of artificial grasses, the production might be multiplied tenfold; and by the introduction of agricultural machines the manual labor might be greatly diminished. All this seemed simple as a sum in arithmetic, and Victor Alexandr'itch, "more scholarium rei familiaris ignarus," without a moment's hesitation expended his ready money in procuring from England a threshing-machine, plows, harrows, and other implements of the newest model.

The arrival of these was an event that was long remembered. The peasants examined them with attention, not unmixed with wonder, but said nothing. When the master explained to them the advantages of the new instruments, they still remained silent. Only one old man, gazing at the threshing-machine, remarked, in an audible "aside," "A cunning people these Germans!"* On being asked for their opinion, they replied vaguely, "How should we know? It *ought* to be so." But when their master had retired, and was explaining to his wife and the French governess that the chief obstacle to progress in Russia was the apathetic indolence and conservative spirit of the peasantry, they expressed their opinions more freely. "These may be all very well for the Germans, but they won't do for us. How are our little horses to drag these big plows and harrows? And as for that"—the threshing-machine—"it's of no use." Further examination and reflection confirmed this first impression, and it was unanimously decided that no good would come of the new-fangled inventions.

These apprehensions proved to be only too well founded. The plows and harrows were much too heavy for the peasants' small horses, and the threshing-machine broke down at the first attempt

* The Russian peasant comprehends all the inhabitants of Western Europe under the term "Nyemtsi," which in the language of the educated designates only Germans. The rest of humanity is composed of Pravoslavniye (Greek Orthodox), and Busurmany (Mahometans), Poljacki (Poles).

to use it. For the purchase of lighter implements or stronger horses there was no ready money, and for the repairing of the threshing-machine there was not an engineer within a radius of a hundred and fifty miles. The experiment was, in short, a complete failure, and the new purchases were put away out of sight.

For some weeks after this incident Victor Alexandr'itch felt very despondent, and spoke more than usual about the apathy and stupidity of the peasantry. His faith in infallible science was somewhat shaken, and his benevolent aspirations were for a time laid aside. But this eclipse of faith was not of long duration. Gradually he recovered his normal condition, and began to form new schemes. From the study of certain works on political economy he learned that the system of communal property was ruinous to the fertility of the soil, and that free labor was always more productive than serfage. By the light of these principles he discovered why the peasantry in Russia were so poor, and by what means their condition could be ameliorated. The communal land should be divided into family lots, and the serfs, instead of being forced to work for the proprietor, should pay a yearly sum as rent. The advantages of this change he perceived clearly—as clearly as he had formerly perceived the advantages of English agricultural implements—and he determined to make the experiment on his own estate.

His first step was to call together the more intelligent and influential of his serfs, and to explain to them his project; but his efforts at explanation were eminently unsuccessful. Even with regard to ordinary current affairs he could not express himself in that simple, homely language with which alone the peasants are familiar, and when he spoke on abstract subjects he naturally became quite unintelligible to his uneducated audience. The serfs listened attentively, but understood nothing. He might as well have spoken to them, as he often did in another kind of society, about the comparative excellence of Italian and German music. At a second attempt he was rather more successful. The peasants came to understand that what he wished was to break up the "Mir," or rural commune, and to put them all "on Obrok"—that is to say, make them pay a yearly sum instead of giving him a certain amount of agricultural labor. Much to his astonishment, his scheme did not meet with any sympathy. As to being put "on Obrok," the serfs did not much object, though they pre-

ferred to remain as they were ; but his proposal to break up the " Mir " fairly astonished and bewildered them. They regarded it as a sea-captain might regard the proposal of a scientific wise-acre to knock a hole in the ship's bottom in order to make her sail faster. Though they did not say much, he was intelligent enough to see that they would offer a strenuous, passive opposition, and as he did not wish to act tyrannically, he let the matter drop. Thus a second benevolent scheme was shipwrecked. Many other schemes had a similar fate, and Victor Alexandr'itch began to perceive that it was very difficult to do good in this world, especially when the persons to be benefited were Russian peasants.

In reality the fault lay less with the serfs than with their master. Victor Alexandr'itch was by no means a stupid man. On the contrary, he had more than average talents. Few men were more capable of grasping a new idea and forming a scheme for its realization, and few men could play more dexterously with abstract principles. What he wanted was the power of dealing with concrete facts. The principles which he had acquired from University lectures and desultory reading were far too vague and abstract for practical use. He had studied abstract science without gaining any technical knowledge of details, and consequently when he stood face to face with real life he was like a student who, having studied mechanics in text-books, is suddenly placed in a workshop and ordered to construct a machine. Only there was one difference : Victor Alexandr'itch was not ordered to do anything. Voluntarily, without any apparent necessity, he set himself to work with tools which he could not handle. It was this that chiefly puzzled the peasants. Why should he trouble himself with these new schemes, when he might live comfortably as he was ? In some of his projects they could detect a desire to increase the revenue, but in others they could discover no such motive. In these latter they attributed his conduct to pure caprice, and put it into the same category as those mad pranks in which proprietors of jovial humor sometimes indulged.

In the last years of serfage there were a good many landed proprietors like Victor Alexandr'itch—men who wished to do something beneficent, and did not know how to do it. When serfage was being abolished the majority of these men took an active part in the great work and rendered valuable service to their country. Victor Alexandr'itch acted otherwise. At first he

sympathized warmly with the proposed emancipation and wrote several articles on the advantages of free labor, but when the Government took the matter into its own hands he declared that the officials had deceived and slighted the noblesse, and he went over to the opposition. Before the Imperial Edict was signed he went abroad, and traveled for three years in Germany, France, and Italy. Shortly after his return he married a pretty, accomplished young lady, the daughter of an eminent official in St. Petersburg, and since that time he has lived in his country-house.

Though a man of education and culture, Victor Alexandr'itch spends his time in almost as indolent a way as the men of the old school. He rises somewhat later, and instead of sitting by the open window and gazing into the courtyard, he turns over the pages of a book or periodical. Instead of dining at mid-day and supping at nine o'clock, he takes *déjeuner* at twelve and dines at five. He spends less time in sitting in the veranda and pacing up and down with his hands behind his back, for he can vary the operation of time-killing by occasionally writing a letter, or by standing behind his wife at the piano while she plays selections from Mozart and Beethoven. But these peculiarities are merely variations in detail. If there is any essential difference between the lives of Victor Alexandr'itch and of Ivan Ivan'itch, it is in the fact that the former never goes out into the fields to see how the work is done, and never troubles himself with the state of the weather, the condition of the crops, and cognate subjects. He leaves the management of his estate entirely to his steward, and refers to that personage all peasants who come to him with complaints or petitions. Though he takes a deep interest in the peasant as an impersonal, abstract entity, and loves to contemplate concrete examples of the genus in the works of certain popular authors, he does not like to have any direct relations with peasants in the flesh. If he has to speak with them he always feels awkward, and suffers from the odor of their sheepskins. Ivan Ivan'itch is ever ready to talk with the peasants, and give them sound, practical advice, or severe admonitions; and in the old times he was apt, in moments of irritation, to supplement his admonitions by a free use of his fists. Victor Alexandr'itch, on the contrary, never could give any advice except vague common-place, and as to using his fist, he would have shrunk from that, not only from respect to humanitarian

principles, but also from motives which belong to the region of esthetic sensitiveness.

This difference between the two men has an important influence on their pecuniary affairs. The stewards of both steal from their masters, but that of Ivan Ivan'itch steals with difficulty, and to a very limited extent, whereas that of Victor Alexandr'itch steals regularly and methodically, and counts his gains, not by kopeks, but by roubles. Though the two estates are of about the same size and value, they give a very different revenue. The rough, practical man has a much larger income than his elegant, well-educated neighbor, and at the same time spends very much less. The consequences of this, if not at present visible, must soon become painfully apparent. Ivan Ivan'itch will doubtless leave to his children an unencumbered estate and a certain amount of capital. The children of Victor Alexandr'itch have a different prospect. He has already begun to mortgage his property and to cut down the timber, and he always finds a deficit at the end of the year. What will become of his wife and children when the estate comes to be sold for payment of the mortgage, it is difficult to predict. He thinks very little of that eventuality, and when his thoughts happen to wander in that direction, he consoles himself with the thought that before the crash comes he will have inherited a fortune from a rich uncle who has no children. He knows very well—or at least might know, if he took the trouble to think—that this calculation is founded on mere possibilities. The uncle may still marry, and have children, or he may choose some other nephew as his heir, or he may simply live on and enjoy his fortune for thirty years to come. The chances, therefore, are very uncertain; but Victor Alexandr'itch, like other improvident people, likes to think that there must be somewhere behind the scenes a beneficent *Deus ex machina*, that will doubtless appear at the proper moment, and miraculously rescue him from the natural consequences of his folly.

The proprietors of the old school lead the same uniform, monotonous life year after year, with very little variation. Victor Alexandr'itch, on the contrary, feels the need of a periodical return to "civilized society," and accordingly spends a few weeks every winter in St. Petersburg. During the summer months he has the society of his brother—*un homme tout-à-fait civilisé*—who possesses an estate a few miles off.

This brother, Vladimir Alexandr'itch, was educated in the School of Law in St. Petersburg, and has since risen rapidly in the service. He holds now a prominent position in one of the ministries, and has the honorary court title of "Chambellan de sa Majesté." He is a marked man in the higher circles of the administration, and will, it is thought, some day become minister. Though an adherent of enlightened views, and a professed "Liberal," he contrives to keep on very good terms with those who imagine themselves to be "Conservatives." In this he is assisted by his soft, oily manner. If you express an opinion to him he will always begin by telling you that you are quite right; and if he ends by showing you that you are quite wrong, he will at least make you feel that your error is not only excusable, but in some way highly creditable to your intellectual acuteness or goodness of heart. In spite of his liberalism, he is a staunch monarchist, and considers that the time has not yet come for the Emperor to grant a constitution. He recognizes that the present order of things has its defects, but thinks that, on the whole, it acts very well, and would act much better if certain high officials were removed, and more energetic men put in their places. Like all genuine St. Petersburg Tchinovniks (officials) he has great faith in the miraculous power of Imperial ukazes and ministerial circulars, and believes that national progress consists in multiplying these documents, and centralizing the administration, so as to give them more effect. As a supplementary means of progress he highly approves of esthetic culture, and he can speak with some eloquence of the humanizing influence of the fine arts. For his own part he is well acquainted with French and English classics, and particularly admires Macaulay, whom he declares to have been not only a great writer, but also a great statesman. Among writers of fiction he gives the palm to George Eliot, and speaks of the novelists of his own country, and, indeed, of Russian literature as a whole, in the most disparaging terms.

A very different estimate of Russian literature is held by Alexander Ivan'itch N——, formerly arbiter in peasant affairs, and now justice of the peace. Discussions on this subject often take place between the two. The admirer of Macaulay declares that Russia has, properly speaking, no literature whatever, and that the works which bear the names of Russian authors are nothing but a feeble echo of the literature of Western Europe.

"Imitators," he is wont to say, "skillful imitators, we have produced in abundance. But where is there a man of original genius? What is our famous poet Zhukófski? A translator. What is Pushkin? A clever pupil of the romantic school. What is Lérmontof? A feeble imitator of Byron. What is Gógol?"

At this point Alexander Ivan'itch invariably intervenes. He is ready to sacrifice all the pseudo-classic and romantic poetry, and, in fact, the whole of Russian literature anterior to about the year 1840, but he will not allow anything disrespectful to be said of Gógol, who about that time founded the Russian realistic school. "Gógol," he holds, "was a great and original genius. Gógol not only created a new kind of literature; he at the same time transformed the reading public, and inaugurated a new era in the intellectual development of the nation. By his humorous, satirical sketches he swept away the metaphysical dreaming and foolish romantic affectation then in fashion, and taught men to see their country as it was, in all its hideous ugliness. With his help the young generation perceived the rottenness of the administration, and the meanness, stupidity, dishonesty, and worthlessness of the landed proprietors, whom he made the special butt of his ridicule. The recognition of defects produced a desire for reform. From laughing at the proprietors there was but one step to despising them, and when we learned to despise the proprietors we naturally came to sympathize with the serfs. Thus the emancipation was prepared by the literature; and when the great question had to be solved, it was the literature that discovered a satisfactory solution."

This is a subject on which Alexander Ivan'itch feels very strongly, and on which he always speaks with warmth. He knows a good deal regarding the intellectual movement which began about 1840, and culminated in the great reforms of the present reign, because he lived in it and took a certain active part in it. He can dimly remember the sensation caused by the publication of Gógol's famous description of Russian provincial life. He can remember how, a few years later, he entered the University of Moscow, and attended the brilliant historical lectures of Granófski. At that time the literary society of Moscow was divided into two hostile camps—the Slavophiles and the Occidentalists. The former wished to develop an independent national culture, on the foundation of popular conceptions and Greek Orthodoxy, whilst the lat-

ter strove to adopt and assimilate the intellectual treasures of Western Europe. His sympathies were with the latter party, and he looked on its leader, Belinski, as the greatest man of the time. He troubled himself very little with serious academic work, but he read with intense interest all the leading periodicals, and gradually arrived at the conviction that art should not be cultivated for its own sake, but should be made subservient to social progress. This belief was confirmed by a perusal of some of George Sand's earlier works, which were for him a kind of revelation. Social questions engrossed his thoughts, and all other subjects seemed puny by comparison. Then came in 1848 the political disturbances in Western Europe—a time of wild hopes and boundless aspirations, followed by a period of violent re-action, during which all reference to political and social questions was rigorously prohibited by the Press-censure. This period Alexander Ivan'itch spent in the country, managing his estate and waiting patiently for the advent of a brighter day. And when this brighter day dawned, after the Crimean War, he threw himself enthusiastically into the new movement and advocated in various periodicals the abolition of serfage. The Emancipation Manifest was signed in 1861, and shortly afterwards he was appointed one of the "Arbiters of the Peace" in the district where he lived. The duty of these arbiters was to put the Emancipation Law into execution, and to act as mediators between the landed proprietors and their serfs. This was for him thoroughly congenial work, and he executed it with such impartiality and judgment that on all the estates for which he acted as arbiter there were no serious quarrels or misunderstandings. In 1867 he was elected a justice of the peace by the Zemstvo Assembly, and fulfills his new duties with equal ability. He is at the same time a deputy of the Assembly, and takes a lively interest in all local affairs.

Though he visits occasionally the great St. Petersburg official, when that personage honors the district with his presence, he does not profess to have towards him any sentiments of friendship or respect. On the contrary, he declares him to be a walking incarnation of bureaucracy, and proclaims bureaucracy to be the great bane of Russia. "These Tchinovniks," he is wont to say in moments of excitement, "who live in St. Petersburg and govern the country, know about as much of Russia as they do of China.

They live in a world of official documents, and know nothing of the real wants and interests of the people. So long as all the required formalities are duly observed they are perfectly satisfied. The people may be allowed to die of starvation if only the fact do not appear in the official reports. Powerless to do any good themselves, they are powerful enough to prevent others, and are extremely jealous of all private initiative. How have they acted, for instance, towards the Zemstvo? The Zemstvo is really a good institution, and might have done great things if it had been left alone, but as soon as it began to show a little independent energy the officials at once clipped its wings and then strangled it. Towards the Press they have acted in the same way. They are afraid of the Press, because they fear above all things a healthy public opinion, which the Press alone can create. Everything that disturbs the habitual routine alarms them. Russia cannot make any real progress so long as she is ruled by these cursed *Tchinovniks*!"

The amiable brother of the great official fares no better at the hands of the liberal justice of the peace. He is not a *Tchinovnik*, but he is something almost as bad—a "*baritch*," that is to say a pampered, capricious, spoiled child, whose life is spent in elegant indolence and fine talking. In spite of his generous aspirations he never succeeds in doing anything useful to himself or to others. When the peasant question was raised and there was work to be done, he went abroad and talked liberalism in Paris and Baden-Baden. Though he reads, or at least professes to read, books on agriculture, and is always ready to discourse on the best means of preventing the exhaustion of the soil, he knows less of farming than a peasant boy of twelve, and when he goes into the fields he can hardly distinguish rye from oats. Instead of babbling about German and Italian music, he would do well to learn a little about practical farming, and look after his estate.

Whilst the justice of the peace thus censures readily his neighbors, he is himself not without detractors. Some staid old proprietors regard him as a dangerous man, and can quote certain expressions of his which seem to indicate that his notions of property are somewhat loose. Many consider that his liberalism is of a very violent kind, and that he has strong republican sympathies. In his decisions as Justice he often leans, it is said, to the side of the peasants against the proprietors. Then he is

always trying to induce the peasants of the neighboring villages to found schools, and he has wonderful ideas about the best method of teaching children. These and similar facts make many people believe that he has very advanced ideas, and one old gentleman habitually calls him—half in joke and half in earnest—“our friend the Communist.” At the next elections for justices of the peace it is highly probable that he will be blackballed. Certainly there will be an attempt to prevent his re-election.

In reality Alexander Ivan'itch has nothing of the communist about him. Though he loudly denounces the *Tchinovnik* spirit—or, as we should say, red-tapeism in all its forms—and is an ardent partisan of local self-government, he is one of the last men in the world to take part in any revolutionary movement. He would like to see the Central Government enlightened and controlled by public opinion and by a national representation, but he believes that this can only be effected by voluntary concessions on the part of the autocratic power. He has, perhaps, a certain sentimental love of the peasantry, and is always ready to advocate its interests; but he has come too much in contact with individual peasants to accept those idealized descriptions in which some popular writers indulge, and it may safely be asserted that the accusation of his voluntarily favoring peasants at the expense of proprietors is wholly unfounded. Alexander Ivan'itch is, in fact, a quiet, sensible man, who is capable of generous enthusiasm, and is not at all satisfied with the existing state of things, but he is not at all a dreamer and a *revolutionnaire*, as some of his neighbors assert.

I am afraid I cannot say as much for his younger brother Nikolaï, who lives with him. Nikolaï Ivan'itch is a tall slender man, rather over thirty years of age, with emaciated face, bilious complexion, and long black hair—evidently a person of excitable, nervous temperament. When he speaks he articulates rapidly, and uses more gesticulation than is common among his countrymen. His favorite subject of conversation, or rather of discourse, for he more frequently preaches than talks, is the lamentable state of the country and the worthlessness of the Government. Against the Government he has a great many causes for complaint, and one or two of a personal kind. In 1861 he was a student in the University of St. Petersburg. At that time there was a great deal of public excitement all over Russia, and especially in the capital. The serfs had just been emancipated, and other important reforms

had been undertaken. There was a general conviction among the young generation—and it must be added among many older men—that the autocratic, paternal system of government was at an end, and that Russia was about to be re-organized according to the most advanced principles of political and social science. The students, sharing this conviction, wished to be freed from all academical authority, and to organize a kind of academical self-government. They desired especially the right of holding public meetings for the discussion of their common affairs. The authorities could not allow this, and issued a list of rules prohibiting meetings and raising the class-fees, so as practically to exclude many of the poorer students. This was felt to be a wanton insult to the spirit of the new era. In spite of the prohibition, indignation meetings were held, and fiery speeches made by male and female orators, first in the class-rooms and afterwards in the courtyard of the University. On one occasion a long procession marched through the principal streets to the house of the Curator. Never had such a spectacle been seen before in St. Petersburg; timid people feared that it was the commencement of an insurrection, and dreamed about barricades. At last the authorities took energetic measures; about 300 students were arrested, and of these, thirty-two were expelled from the University.

Among those who were expelled was Nicolaï Ivan'itch. All his hopes of becoming a professor as he had intended were thereby shipwrecked, and he had to look out for some other profession. A literary career now seemed the most promising, and certainly the most congenial to his tastes. It would enable him to gratify his ambition of being a public man, and give him opportunities of attacking and annoying his persecutors. He had already written occasionally for one of the leading periodicals, and now he became a regular contributor. His stock of positive knowledge was not very large, but he had the power of writing fluently and of making his readers believe that he had an unlimited store of political wisdom which the Press-censure prevented him from publishing. Besides this, he had the talent of saying sharp, satirical things about those in authority, in such a way that even a Press-censor could not easily raise objections. Articles written in this style were sure at that time to be very successful, and his articles had a very great success. He became a known man in literary circles, and for a time all went well. But gradually he became less cau-

tious, whilst the authorities became more vigilant. Some copies of a violent seditious proclamation fell into the hands of the police, and it was generally believed that the document proceeded from the coterie to which he belonged. From that moment he was carefully watched, till one night he was unexpectedly roused from his sleep by a gendarme and conveyed to the fortress.

When a man is arrested in this way for a real or supposed political offense, there are two modes of dealing with him. He may be tried before a regular tribunal, or he may be dealt with "by administrative procedure" (*administrativnom poryadkom*). In the former case he will, if convicted, be condemned to imprisonment for a certain term; or if the offense be of a graver nature, he may be transported to Siberia either for a fixed period or for life. By the administrative procedure he is simply removed without trial to some distant town, and compelled to live there under police supervision during his Majesty's pleasure. Nikolaï Ivan'itch was treated "administratively," because the authorities, though convinced that he was a dangerous character, could not find sufficient evidence to procure his conviction before a court of justice. For five years he lived under police supervision in a small town near the White Sea, and then one day he was informed, without any explanation, that he might go and live anywhere he pleased except in St. Petersburg and Moscow.

Since that time he has lived with his brother, and spends his time in brooding over his grievances and bewailing his shattered illusions. He has lost none of that fluency which gained him an ephemeral literary reputation, and can speak by the hour on political and social questions to any one who will listen to him. It is extremely difficult, however, to follow his discourses, and utterly impossible to retain them in the memory. They belong to what may be called political metaphysics—for though he professes to hold metaphysics in abhorrence, he is himself a thorough metaphysician in his modes of thought. He lives, indeed, in a world of abstract conceptions, from which he can scarcely perceive concrete facts, and his arguments are always a kind of clever juggling with such equivocal, conventional terms as aristocracy, bourgeoisie, monarchy, and the like. At concrete facts he arrives, not directly by observation, but by deductions from general principles, so that his facts can never by any possibility contradict his theories. Then he has certain axioms which he tacitly assumes, and on which all

his arguments are based ; as, for instance, that everything to which the term "liberal" can be applied must necessarily be good at all times and under all conditions.

Among a mass of vague conceptions, which it is impossible to reduce to any clearly-defined form, he has a few ideas which are perhaps not strictly true, but which are at least intelligible. Among these is his conviction that Russia had recently a magnificent opportunity of distancing all Europe on the road of progress, and voluntarily threw away her opportunity. She might, he thinks, at the time of the Emancipation, have boldly accepted all the most advanced principles of political and social science, and have completely re-organized the political and social structure in accordance with them. Other nations could not take such a step, because they are old and decrepit, filled with stubborn, hereditary prejudices, and cursed with an aristocracy and a bourgeoisie; but Russia is young, knows nothing of social castes, and has no deep-rooted prejudices to contend with. The population is like potter's clay, which can be made to assume any form that Science may recommend. The Emperor began a magnificent sociological experiment, but he stopped half-way. Perhaps his successor may be induced to make a bolder attempt.

In this idea there is a certain amount of truth. Russia could accomplish political and social evolutions which would prove fatal to more delicately organized States. She has already more than once accomplished such evolutions successfully, without any serious disturbances, and she may accomplish others in the future, *provided the Autocratic Power is preserved, and the people remain politically passive.* This very important condition Nikolaï Ivan'itch fails to perceive. He is a "Liberal," and as such is a zealous adherent of Parliamentary institutions. For him a constitution is a kind of omnipotent fetish. You may try to explain to him that a Parliamentary régime, whatever its advantages may be, necessarily produces political parties and political conflicts, and is not nearly so suitable for grand sociological experiments as a good paternal despotism. You may try to convince him that, though it may be difficult to convert an Autocrat, it is infinitely more difficult to convert a Parliament. But all your efforts will be in vain. He will assure you that a Russian Parliament would be something quite different from what Parliaments commonly are. It would contain no parties, for Russia has no social castes, and

would be guided entirely by scientific considerations—as free from prejudice and personal influences as a philosopher speculating on the nature of the Infinite ! In short, he evidently imagines that a national Parliament would be composed of himself and his friends, and that the nation would calmly submit to their ukazes as it has hitherto submitted to the ukazes of the Tsar.

Pending the advent of this political millennium, when unimpassioned Science is to reign supreme, Nikolai Ivanitch allows himself the luxury of indulging in some very decided political animosities, and he hates as only a fanatic can hate. Firstly and chiefly, he hates what he calls the *Bourgeoisie*—he is obliged to use the French word, because his native language does not contain an equivalent term—and especially capitalists of all sorts and dimensions. Next, he hates Aristocracy, especially a form of aristocracy called Feudalism. To these abstract terms he does not attach a very precise meaning, but he hates the entities which they are supposed to represent, quite as heartily as if they were personal enemies. Among the things which he hates in his own country, the Autocratic power holds the first place. Next, as an emanation from the Autocratic power, come the *Tchinovniks*, and especially the gendarmes. Then come the landed proprietors. Though he is—or at least will be after his mother's death—himself a landed proprietor, he regards the class as cumberers of the ground, and thinks that all their land should be confiscated and distributed among the peasantry.

All proprietors have the misfortune to come under his sweeping denunciations, because they are inconsistent with his ideal of a peasant Empire, but he recognizes amongst them degrees of depravity. Some are simply obstructive, whilst others are actively prejudicial to the public welfare. Among these latter a special object of aversion is Prince S——, because he not only possesses very large estates, but at the same time has aristocratic pretensions, and calls himself a Conservative.

Prince S—— is by far the most important man in the district. His family is one of the oldest in the country—being descended from no less a personage than Rurik, who is supposed to have founded the Russian Empire a thousand years ago—but he does not owe his influence to his pedigree, for pedigree pure and simple does not count for much in Russia. He is influential and respected, because he holds a high official position, and belongs by birth to

that group of families which form the permanent nucleus of the ever-changing Court society. His father and grandfather were important personages in the Administration and at Court, and his sons and grandsons will probably in this respect follow in the footsteps of their ancestors. Though in the eye of the law all nobles are equal, and, theoretically speaking, promotion is gained exclusively by personal merit, yet, in reality, those who have friends at Court rise more easily and more rapidly.

The Prince has had a prosperous but not very eventful life. He was educated, first at home, under an English tutor, and afterwards in the "Corps des Pages." On leaving this institution he entered a regiment of the Guards, and has since steadily risen to high military rank. His activity, however, has been chiefly in the civil administration, and he now has a seat in the Council of State. Though he has always taken a certain interest in public affairs, he did not play an important part in any of the great reforms of the present reign. When the peasant question was raised he sympathized with the idea of Emancipation, but did not at all sympathize with the idea of giving land to the emancipated serfs and preserving the communal institutions. What he desired was that the proprietors should liberate their serfs without any pecuniary indemnity, and should receive in return a certain share of political power. His scheme was not adopted, but he has not relinquished the hope that the great landed proprietors may somehow obtain a social and political position similar to that of the great landowners in England; and he thinks that this might be in part accomplished by putting into their hands the local administration in rural affairs. He does not wish, however, that the great landowners should in return bear a large part of the local rates, and he overlooks the fact that they would have to change their character and learn to prefer local influence to high official position and Imperial favor.

Official duties and social relations compel the Prince to spend a large part of the year in the capital. He spends only a few weeks yearly on his estate—sometimes only a few days. The house is large, and fitted up in the English style, with a view to combining elegance and comfort. It contains several spacious apartments, a library, and a billiard-room. There is an extensive park with a score of fallow-deer, an immense garden with hot-houses, numerous horses and carriages, and a legion of servants. When the

family arrive they bring with them an English and French governess and an English tutor for the children. There is always a regular supply of English and French books, newspapers, and periodicals, and the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg*, which gives the news of the day. Russian books and newspapers could easily be obtained if any one desired them. The family have, in short, all the conveniences and comforts which money and refinement can procure, but it cannot be said that they greatly enjoy the time spent in the country. The Princess has no decided objection to it. She is devoted to her children, is fond of reading and correspondence, amuses herself with a school and hospital which she has founded for the peasantry, and occasionally drives over to see her friend, the Countess N——, who lives about fifteen miles off. But the Prince finds country life excessively dull. He does not care for riding or shooting, and he finds nothing else to do. He knows nothing about the management of his estate, and holds consultations with the steward merely *pro forma*—this estate, and the others which he possesses in different provinces, being ruled by a head-steward in St. Petersburg, in whom he has the most complete confidence. In the vicinity there is no one with whom he cares to associate. Naturally he is not a sociable man, and he has acquired a stiff, formal, reserved manner that is common in England, but rarely to be met with in Russia. This manner repels the neighboring proprietors—a fact that he does not at all regret, for they do not belong to his *monde*, and they have in their manners and habits a free-and-easy rusticity which is positively disagreeable to him. His relations with them are therefore confined to formal calls. The greater part of the day he spends in listless loitering, frequently yawning, regretting the pleasant routine of St. Petersburg life—the pleasant chats with his colleagues, the opera, the ballet, the French theater, and the quiet rubber at the “Club Anglais.” His spirits rise as the day of his departure approaches, and when he drives off to the station he looks bright and cheerful. If he consulted merely his own tastes he would never visit his estates at all, and would spend his summer holidays in Germany, France, or Switzerland, as he did in his bachelor days; but he is now father of a family, and considers it right to sacrifice his personal inclinations to the duties of his position.

The Prince belongs to the highest rank of the Russian Noblesse. If we wish to get an idea of the lowest rank we have merely to go

to the neighboring village. There we shall find a number of poor, uneducated men, who live in small, squalid houses, and are not easily to be distinguished from peasants. They are nobles, like the Prince; but, unlike him, they have neither official rank nor large fortune, and their landed property consists of a few acres of poor land, which barely supplies them with the first necessities of life. If we went to other parts of the country we might find men in this condition bearing the title of prince! This is the natural result of the Russian law of inheritance, which does not recognize the principle of primogeniture with regard to titles and estates. All the sons of a prince are princes, and at his death his property, movable and immovable, is divided equally amongst them all.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE NOBLESSE.

The Nobles in Early Times—The Tartar Domination—The Tsardom of Muscovy—Family Dignity—Reforms of Peter the Great—The Nobles adopt West-European Conceptions—Abolition of Obligatory Service—Influence of Catherine II.—The Russian Dvoryanstvo compared with the French Noblesse and the English Aristocracy—Russian Titles—Probable Future of the Russian Noblesse.

NOW that the reader has made the acquaintance of some Russian nobles, he may perhaps desire to know something of the Noblesse * as a class—something of its past history and present condition.

In the old times, when Russia was merely a collection of independent principalities, each reigning prince was surrounded by a group of armed men, composed partly of Boyárs, or large landed proprietors, and partly of knights, or soldiers of fortune. These men, who formed the Noblesse of the time, were to a certain extent under the authority of the Prince, but they were by no means mere obedient, silent executors of his will. The Boyárs might refuse to take part in his military expeditions, and the "free lances" might leave his service and seek employment elsewhere. If he wished to go to war without their consent, they could say to him, as they did on one occasion, "You have planned this yourself, Prince, so we will not go with you, for we knew nothing of it." Nor was this resistance to the princely will always merely passive. Once, in the principality of Galitch, the armed men seized their prince, killed his favorites, burned his mistress, and

* I use here a foreign, in preference to an English, term, because the word "Nobility" would convey an utterly false impression. Etymologically the Russian word "Dvoryanin" means a courtier (from Dvor court); but this term is equally objectionable, because the great majority of the Dvoryanstvo have nothing to do with the Court.

made him swear that he would in future live with his lawful wife. To his successor, who had married the wife of a priest, they spoke thus: "We have not risen against you, Prince, but we will not do reverence to a priest's wife: we will put her to death, and then you may marry whom you please." Even the energetic Bogolubski, one of the most remarkable of the old princes, did not succeed in having his own way. When he attempted to force the Boyárs he met with stubborn opposition, and was finally assassinated. From these incidents, which might be indefinitely multiplied from the old chronicles, we see that in the early period of Russian history the Boyárs and knights were a body of free men, possessing a considerable amount of political power.

Under the Tartar domination this political equilibrium was destroyed. When the country had been conquered, the princes became servile vassals of the Khan, and arbitrary rulers towards their own subjects. The political significance of the nobles was thereby greatly diminished. It was not, however, by any means annihilated. Though the prince no longer depended entirely on their support, he had an interest in retaining their services, to protect his territory in case of sudden attack, or to increase his possessions at the expense of his neighbors when a convenient opportunity presented itself. Theoretically such conquests were impossible, for all removing of the ancient landmarks depended on the decision of the Khan; but in reality the Khan paid little attention to the affairs of his vassals, so long as somebody paid the tribute; and much took place in Russia without his permission. We find, therefore, in some of the principalities the old relations still subsisting under Tartar rule. The famous Dmitri of the Don, for instance, when on his death-bed, speaks thus to his Boyárs: "You know my habits and my character; I was born among you, grew up among you, governed with you—fighting by your side, showing you honor and love, and placing you over towns and districts. I loved your children, and did evil to no one. I rejoiced with you in your joy, mourned with you in your grief, and called you the princes of my land." Then, turning to his children, he adds, as a parting advice: "Love your Boyárs, my children; show them the honor which their services merit, and undertake nothing without their consent."

When the Grand Princes of Moscow brought the other principalities under their power, and formed them into the Tsardom of

Muscovy, the nobles descended another step in the political scale. So long as there were many principalities they could quit the service of a prince, as soon as he gave them reason to be discontented, knowing that they would be well received by one of his rivals ; but now they had no longer any choice. The only rival of Moscow was Lithuania, and precautions were taken to prevent the discontented from crossing the Lithuanian frontier. The nobles were no longer voluntary adherents of a prince, but had become subjects of a Tsar ; and the Tsars were not as the old princes had been. By a violent legal fiction they conceived themselves to be the successors of the Byzantine Emperors, and created a new court ceremonial, borrowed partly from Constantinople and partly from the Tartar Horde. They no longer associated familiarly with the Boyárs, and no longer asked their advice, but treated them rather as menials. When the nobles entered their august master's presence they prostrated themselves in Oriental fashion—occasionally as many as thirty times—and when they incurred his displeasure they were summarily flogged or executed, according to the Tsar's good pleasure. In succeeding to the power of the Khans, the Tsars had adopted, we see, a good deal of the Tartar system of government.

It may seem strange that a class of men, which had formerly shown a proud spirit of independence, should have submitted quietly to such humiliation and oppression without making a serious effort to curb the new power, which had no Tartar hordes at its back to quell opposition. But we must remember that the nobles, as well as the princes, had passed in the meantime through the school of the Tartar domination. In the course of two centuries they had gradually become accustomed to despotic rule in the Oriental sense. If they felt their position humiliating and irksome, they must have felt, too, how difficult it was to better it. Their only resource lay in combining against the common oppressor ; and we have only to glance at the motley, disorganized group, as they cluster round the Tsar, to perceive that combination was impossible. We can distinguish there the mediatized princes, still harboring designs for the recovery of their independence ; the Moscow Boyárs, jealous of their family honor and proud of Muscovite supremacy ; Tartar Murzi, who have submitted to be baptized and have received land like the other nobles ; the Novgorodian magnate, who cannot forget the ancient glory of his native

city ; Lithuanian nobles, who find it more profitable to serve the Tsar than their own sovereign ; petty chiefs, who have fled from the oppression of the Teutonic order ; and many soldiers of fortune from every part of the Russian land. Strong, permanent political factors are not easily formed out of such heterogeneous material.

At the end of the sixteenth century the old dynasty became extinct, and after a short period of political anarchy, commonly called "the troublous times" (*smútnoe vrémÿa*), the Románof family were raised to the throne by the will of the people, or at least by those who were assumed to be its representatives. By this change the Noblesse acquired a somewhat better position. They were no longer exposed to capricious tyranny and barbarous cruelty, such as they had experienced at the hands of Ivan the Terrible, but they did not, as a class, gain any political influence. There were still rival families and rival factions, but there were no political parties in the proper sense of the term, and the highest aim of families and factions was to gain the favor of the Tsar.

The frequent quarrels about precedence which took place among the rival families at this period forms one of the most curious episodes of Russian history. The old patriarchal conception of the family as a unit one and indivisible was still so strong among these men, that the elevation or degradation of one member of a family was considered to affect deeply the honor of all the other members. Each noble family had its rank in a recognized scale of dignity, according to the rank which it held, or had previously held, in the service of the Tsar ; and a whole family would have considered itself dishonored if one of its members accepted a post lower than that to which he was entitled. Whenever a vacant place in the service was filled up, the subordinates of the successful candidate examined the official records and the genealogical trees of their families, in order to discover whether some ancestor of their new superior had not served under one of their own ancestors. If the subordinate found such a case, he complained to the Tsar that it was not becoming for him to serve under a man who had less family honor than himself. Unfounded complaints of this kind often entailed imprisonment or corporal punishment, but in spite of these severe measures the quarrels for precedence were very frequent. At the commencement of a campaign many such disputes were sure to arise, and the Tsar's decision was not always accepted by the party who considered himself aggrieved.

I have met at least with one example of a great dignitary voluntarily mutilating his hand in order to escape the necessity of serving under a man whom he considered his inferior in family dignity. Even at the Tsar's table these rivalries sometimes produced unseemly incidents, for it was almost impossible to arrange the places so as to satisfy all the guests. In one recorded instance a noble who received a place lower than that to which he considered himself entitled, openly declared to the Tsar that he would rather be condemned to death than submit to such an indignity. In another instance of a similar kind the refractory guest was put on his chair by force, but saved his family honor by slipping under the table !

The next transformation of the Noblesse was effected by Peter the Great. Peter was by nature and position an autocrat, and could brook no opposition. Having set before himself a great aim, he sought everywhere obedient, intelligent, energetic instruments to carry out his designs. He himself served the State zealously—as a common artisan, when he considered it necessary—and he insisted on all his subjects doing likewise, under pain of merciless punishment. To noble birth and long pedigrees he habitually showed a most democratic, or rather autocratic, indifference. Intent on obtaining the service of living men, he paid no attention to the claims of dead ancestors, and gave to his servants the pay and honor which their services merited, irrespective of birth or social position. Hence many of his chief coadjutors had no connection with the old Russian families. Count Yaguzhinski, who long held one of the most important posts in the State, was the son of a poor sacristan ; Count Devier was a Portuguese by birth, and had been a cabin-boy ; Baron Shafirof was a Jew ; Hannibal, who died with the rank of Commander-in-Chief, was a negro who had been bought in Constantinople ; and his Serene Highness Prince Ménshikof had begun life, it was said, as a baker's apprentice ! For the future, noble birth was to count for nothing. The service of the State was thrown open to men of all ranks, and personal merit was to be the only claim to promotion.

This must have seemed to the Conservatives of the time a most revolutionary and reprehensible proceeding, but it did not satisfy the reforming tendencies of the great autocrat. He went a step further, and entirely changed the legal status of the Noblesse. Down to his time the nobles were free to serve or not as they

chose, and those who chose to serve enjoyed land on what we should call a feudal tenure. Some served permanently in the military or civil administration, but by far the greater number lived on their estates, and entered the active service merely when the militia was called out in view of war. This system was completely changed when Peter created a large standing army and a great centralized bureaucracy. By one of those "fell swoops" which periodically occur in Russian history, he changed the feudal into freehold tenures, and laid down the principle that all nobles, whatever their landed possessions might be, should serve the State in the Army, the Fleet, or the Civil Administration, from boyhood to old age. In accordance with this principle, any noble who refused to serve was not only deprived of his estate, as in the old times, but was declared to be a traitor and might be condemned to capital punishment.

The nobles were thus transformed into servants of the State, and the State in the time of Peter was a hard taskmaster. They complained bitterly and with reason that they had been deprived of their ancient rights and were compelled to accept quietly and uncomplainingly whatever burdens their master chose to place upon them. "Though our country," they said, "is in no danger of invasion, no sooner is peace concluded than plans are laid for a new war, which has generally no other foundation than the ambition of the Sovereign, or perhaps merely the ambition of one of his ministers. To please him our peasants are utterly exhausted, and we ourselves are forced to leave our homes and families, not as formerly for a single campaign, but for long years. We are compelled to contract debts and to intrust our estates to thieving overseers, who commonly reduce them to such a condition that when we are allowed to retire from the service, in consequence of old age or illness, we cannot to the end of our lives retrieve our prosperity. In a word, we are so exhausted and ruined by the keeping up of a standing army, and by the consequences flowing therefrom, that the most cruel enemy, though he should devastate the whole Empire, could not cause us one half of the injury."*

This Spartan régime, which ruthlessly sacrificed private interests to considerations of State policy, could not long be maintained

* These complaints have been preserved by Vockerodt, a Prussian diplomatic agent of the time.

in its pristine severity. It undermined its own foundations by demanding too much. Draconian laws threatening confiscation and capital punishment were of little avail. Nobles became monks, inscribed themselves as merchants, or engaged themselves as domestic servants, in order to escape their obligations. "Some," says a contemporary, "grow old in disobedience, and have never once appeared in active service. . . . There is, for instance, Theodore Mokeyef. . . . In spite of the strict orders sent regarding him no one could ever catch him. Some of those sent to take him he belabored with blows, and when he could not beat the messengers, he pretended to be dangerously ill, or feigned idiocy, and running into the pond stood in the water up to his neck ; but as soon as the messengers were out of sight he returned home and roared like a lion." *

After Peter's death the system was gradually relaxed, but the Noblesse could not be satisfied by partial concessions. Russia had in the meantime moved, as it were, out of Asia into Europe, and had become one of the great European Powers. The upper classes had been gradually learning something of the fashions, the literature, the institutions, and the moral conceptions of Western Europe, and the nobles naturally compared the class to which they belonged with the aristocracies of Germany and France. For those who were influenced by the new foreign ideas the comparison was humiliating. In the West the Noblesse was a free and privileged class, proud of its liberty, its rights, and its culture ; whereas in Russia the nobles were servants of the State, without privileges, without dignity, subjected to corporal punishment, and burdened with onerous duties from which there was no escape. Thus arose in that section of the Noblesse which had some acquaintance with Western civilization a feeling of dissatisfaction with its actual position, and a desire to gain a social position similar to that of the nobles in France and Germany. These aspirations were in part realized by Peter III., who, in 1762, abolished the principle of obligatory service. His consort, Catherine II., went much further in the same direction, and inaugurated a new epoch in the history of the Dvoryanstvo, a period in which its duties and obligations fell into the background and its rights and privileges came to the front.

* Posóshkof, O skúdsti i bogátstvê.

Catherine had good reason to favor the Noblesse. As a foreigner and a usurper, raised to the throne by a Court conspiracy, she could not awaken in the masses that semi-religious veneration which the legitimate Tsars have always enjoyed, and consequently she had to seek support in the upper classes, who were less rigid and uncompromising in their conceptions of legitimacy. She confirmed, therefore, the ukaze which abolished obligatory service of the nobles, and sought to gain their voluntary service by honors and rewards. In her manifestoes she always spoke of them in the most flattering terms, and tried to convince them that the welfare of the country depended on their loyalty and devotion. Though she had no intention of ceding any of her political power, she formed the nobles of each province into a corporation, with periodical assemblies, which were supposed to resemble the French Provincial Parliaments, and intrusted to each of these corporations a large part of the local administration. By these and similar means, aided by her masculine energy and feminine tact, she made herself very popular, and completely changed the old conceptions about the public service. Formerly service had been looked on as a burden; now it came to be looked on as a privilege. Thousands who had retired to their estates after the publication of the liberation edict now flocked back and sought appointments, and this tendency was greatly increased by the brilliant campaigns against the Turks, which excited the patriotic feelings and gave plentiful opportunities of promotion. "Not only landed proprietors," it is said in a comedy of the time,* "but all men, even shopkeepers and cobblers, aim at becoming officers, and the man who has passed his whole life without official rank seems to be not a human being."

And Catherine did more than this. She shared the idea—generally accepted throughout Europe since the brilliant reign of Louis XIV.—that a refined, pomp-loving, pleasure-seeking Court Noblesse was not only the best bulwark of Monarchy, but also a necessary ornament of every highly-civilized state; and as she ardently desired that her country should have the reputation of being highly civilized, she strove to create this national ornament. The love of French civilization, which already existed among the upper classes of her subjects, here came to her aid, and her efforts

* Князнина, "Khvastún."

in this direction were singularly successful. The Court of St. Petersburg became almost as brilliant, as *galant*, and as frivolous as the Court of Versailles. All who aimed at high honors adopted French fashions, spoke the French language, and affected an unqualified admiration for French classical literature. The courtiers talked of the "point d'honneur," discussed the question as to what was consistent with the dignity of a noble, sought to display "that chivalrous spirit which constitutes the pride and ornament of France;" and looked back with horror on the humiliating position of their fathers and grandfathers. "Peter the Great," writes one of them, "beat all who surrounded him, without distinction of family or rank; but now, many of us would certainly prefer capital punishment to life, after being beaten or flogged, even though the castigation were applied by the sacred hands of the Lord's Anointed."

The tone which reigned in the Court circle of St. Petersburg spread gradually toward the lower ranks of the *Dvoryánstvo*, and it seemed to superficial observers that a very fair imitation of the French Noblesse had been produced, but in reality the copy was very unlike the model. The Russian *Dvoryanin* easily learned the language and assumed the manners of the French *gentilhomme*, and succeeded in changing his physical and intellectual exterior; but all those deeper and more delicate parts of human nature, which are formed by the accumulated experience of past generations, could not be so easily and rapidly changed. The French *gentilhomme* was the direct descendant of the feudal baron, with the fundamental conceptions of his ancestors deeply imbedded in his nature. He had not, indeed, the old haughty bearing toward the Sovereign, and his language was tinged with the fashionable democratic philosophy of the time; but he possessed a large intellectual and moral inheritance that had come down to him directly from the palmy days of feudalism—an inheritance which even the Great Revolution, which was then preparing, could not annihilate. The Russian noble, on the contrary, had received from his ancestors entirely different traditions. His father and grandfather had been conscious of the burdens rather than the privileges of the class to which they belonged. They had considered it no disgrace to receive corporal punishment, and had been jealous of their honor, not as gentlemen or descendants of Boyárs, but as Brigadiers, College Assessors, or

Privy Councilors. Their dignity had rested not on the grace of God, but on the will of the Tsar. Under these circumstances even the proudest magnate of Catherine's Court, though he might speak French more fluently than his mother-tongue, could not be very deeply penetrated with the conception of noble blood, the sacred character of nobility, and the numerous feudal ideas interwoven with these conceptions. And in adopting the outward forms of a foreign culture the nobles did not, it seems, gain much in true dignity. "The old pride of the nobles has fallen!" exclaims one who had more genuine aristocratic feeling than his fellows.* "There are no longer any honorable families, but merely official rank and personal merits. All seek official rank, and as all cannot render direct services, distinctions are sought by every possible means—by flattering the Monarch and toadying the important personages." There was considerable truth in this complaint, but the voice of this solitary aristocrat was as of one crying in the wilderness. The whole of the educated classes—men of old family and *parvenus* alike—were, with few exceptions, too much engrossed with place-hunting to attend to such sentimental wailing.

If the Russian Noblesse was thus in its new form but a very imperfect imitation of its French model, it was still more unlike the English aristocracy. Notwithstanding the liberal phrases in which Catherine habitually indulged, she never had the least intention of ceding one jot or tittle of her autocratic power, and the Noblesse as a class never obtained even a shadow of political influence. There was no real independence under the new airs of dignity and hauteur. In all their acts and openly expressed opinions the courtiers were guided by the real or supposed wishes of the Sovereign, and much of their political sagacity was employed in endeavoring to discover what would please her. "People never talk politics in the salons," says a contemporary witness,† "not even to praise the Government. Fear has produced habits of prudence, and the Frondeurs of the Capital express their opinions only in the confidence of intimate friendship or in a relationship still more confidential. Those who cannot bear this constraint retire to Moscow, which cannot be called the

* Prince Shitchebátov.

† Ségur, long Ambassador of France at the Court of Catherine.

center of opposition, for there is no such thing as opposition in a country with an autocratic government, but which is the capital of the discontented." And even there the discontent did not venture to show itself in the Imperial presence. "In Moscow," says another witness, accustomed to the obsequiousness of Versailles, "you might believe yourself to be among republicans who have just thrown off the yoke of a tyrant, but as soon as the Court arrives you see nothing but abject slaves." *

Though thus excluded from direct influence in political affairs the Noblesse might still have acquired a certain political significance in the State, by means of the Provincial Assemblies, and by the part they took in local administration; but in reality they had neither the requisite political experience, nor the requisite patience, nor even the desire to pursue such a policy. The majority of the proprietors preferred the chances of promotion in the Imperial service to the tranquil life of a country gentleman; and those who resided permanently on their estates showed indifference or positive antipathy to everything connected with the local administration. What was officially described as "a privilege conferred on the nobles for their fidelity, and for the generous sacrifice of their lives in their country's cause," was regarded by those who enjoyed it as a new kind of obligatory service—an obligation to supply judges and officers of rural police!

If we require any additional proof that the nobles amidst all these changes were still as dependent as ever on the arbitrary will or caprice of the Monarch, we have only to glance at their position in the time of Paul I., the capricious, eccentric, violent son and successor of Catherine. The autobiographical memoirs of the time depict in vivid colors the humiliating position of even the leading men in the State, in constant fear of exciting by act, word, or look the wrath of the Sovereign. As we read these contemporary records we seem to have before us a picture of ancient Rome under the most despotic and capricious of her Emperors. Irritated and embittered before his accession to the throne by the haughty demeanor of his mother's favorites, Paul lost no opportunity of showing his contempt for aristocratic pretensions, and of humiliating those who were supposed to harbor them. "Ap-

* Sabathier de Cabres. Catherine II. et la Cour de Russie en 1772.

prenez, Monsieur," he said, angrily, on one occasion to Dumouriez, who had accidentally referred to one of the "considerable" personages of the Court, "Apprenez qu'il n'y a pas de considérable ici, que la personne à laquelle je parle et pendant le temps que je lui parle!" *

From the time of Catherine down to the commencement of the present reign no important change was made in the legal status of the Noblesse, but a gradual change took place in its social character by the continual influx of Western ideas and Western culture. The exclusively French culture in vogue at the Court of Catherine assumed a more cosmopolitan coloring, and permeated downwards till all who had any pretensions to being *civilisés* spoke French with tolerable fluency and possessed at least a superficial acquaintance with the literature of Western Europe. What chiefly distinguished them in the eye of the law from the other classes was the privilege of possessing "inhabited estates"—that is to say, estates with serfs. By the emancipation of the serfs in 1861 this valuable privilege was abolished, and about one-half of their landed property passed into the hands of the peasantry. By the administrative reforms which have since taken place, any little significance which the provincial corporations may have possessed has been annihilated. Thus, at the present day, the nobles are on a level with the other classes with regard to the right of possessing landed property and the administration of local affairs.

From this rapid sketch the reader will easily perceive that the Russian Noblesse has had a peculiar historical development. In Germany, France, and England the nobles were early formed into a homogeneous organized body by the political conditions in which they were placed. They had to repel the encroaching tendencies of Monarchy on the one hand, and of the Bourgeoisie on the other; and in this long struggle with powerful rivals they instinctively held together and developed a vigorous *esprit de corps*. New members penetrated into their ranks, but the number of these intruders was so small that they were rapidly assimilated without modifying the general character or recognized ideals of the class, and without rudely disturbing the fiction of purity of blood. The class thus assumed more and more the nature of a

* This saying is often falsely attributed to Nicholas. The anecdote is related by Ségur.

caste with a peculiar intellectual and moral culture, and stoutly defended its position and privileges till the ever-increasing power of the middle classes undermined its influence. Its fate in different countries has been different. In Germany it clung to its feudal traditions, and still preserves its social exclusiveness. In France it was deprived of its political influence by the Monarchy and crushed by the Revolution. In England it moderated its pretensions, allied itself with the middle classes, created under the disguise of constitutional monarchy an aristocratic republic, and conceded inch by inch, as necessity demanded, a share of its political influence to the ally that had helped it to curb the Royal power. Thus the German baron, the French gentilhomme, and the English nobleman represent three distinct, well-marked types, but amidst all their diversities they have much in common. They have all preserved to a greater or less extent a haughty consciousness of innate inextinguishable superiority over the lower orders, together with a more or less carefully disguised dislike for the class which has been, and still is, an aggressive rival.

The Russian Noblesse has not these characteristics. It was formed out of more numerous and more heterogeneous materials, and these materials did not spontaneously combine to form an organic whole, but were crushed into a conglomerate mass by the weight of the autocratic power. It never became a semi-independent factor in the State. What rights and privileges it possesses it received from the Monarchy, and consequently it has no deep-rooted jealousy or hatred of the Imperial prerogative. On the other hand, it has never had to struggle with the other social classes, and therefore it harbors towards them no feelings of rivalry or hostility. If we hear a Russian noble speak with indignation of autocracy or with acrimony of the bourgeoisie, we may be sure that these feelings have their source not in traditional medieval conceptions, but in principles learned from the modern schools of social and political philosophy. The class to which he belongs has undergone so many transformations that it has no hoary traditions or deep-rooted prejudices, and always willingly adapts itself to existing conditions. Indeed, it may be said in general that it looks more to the future than the past, and is ever ready to accept any new ideas that wear the badge of progress. Its freedom from traditions and prejudices makes it singularly susceptible of generous enthusiasm and capable of vigorous spasmodic

action, but calm moral courage and tenacity of purpose are not among its prominent attributes. In a word, we find in it neither the peculiar virtues nor the peculiar vices which are engendered and fostered by an atmosphere of political liberty.

However we may explain the fact, there is no doubt that the Russian Noblesse has little or nothing of what we call aristocratic feeling—little or nothing of that haughty, domineering, exclusive spirit which we are accustomed to associate with the word Aristocracy. We find plenty of Russians who are proud of their wealth, of their culture, or of their official position, but we scarcely ever find a Russian who is proud of his birth or imagines that the fact of his having a long pedigree gives him any right to political privileges or social consideration. Such ideas appear to the ordinary Russian noble absurd and ridiculous. Hence there is a certain amount of truth in the oft-repeated saying that there is in reality no aristocracy in Russia.

Certainly the Noblesse as a whole cannot be called an aristocracy. If the term is to be used at all, it must be applied to a group of families which cluster around the Court and form the highest ranks of the Noblesse. This social aristocracy contains many old families, but its real basis is official rank and general culture rather than pedigree or blood. The feudal conceptions of noble birth, good family, and the like have been adopted by some of its members, but do not form one of its conspicuous features. Though habitually practicing a certain exclusiveness, it has none of those characteristics of a caste which we find in the German *Adel*, and is utterly unable to understand such institutions as *Tafelfähigkeit*, by which a man who has not a pedigree of a certain length is considered unworthy to sit down at a royal table. It takes rather the English aristocracy as its model, and harbors the secret hope of one day obtaining a social and political position similar to that of the nobility and gentry of England. Though it has no peculiar legal privileges, its actual position in the Administration and at Court gives its members great facilities for advancement in the public service. On the other hand, its semi-bureaucratic character, together with the law and custom of dividing landed property among the children at the death of their parents, deprives it of stability. New men force their way into it by official distinction, whilst many of the old families are compelled by poverty to retire from its ranks. The son of a small

proprietor or even of a parish priest may rise to the highest offices of State, whilst the descendants of the half-mythical Rurik may descend to the rank of peasants. It is said that not long ago a certain Prince Krapotkin gained his living as a cabman in St. Petersburg!

It is evident, then, that this social aristocracy must not be confounded with the titled families. Titles do not possess the same value in Russia as in Western Europe. They are very common—because the titled families are numerous, and all the children bear the titles of the parents even while the parents are still alive—and they are by no means always associated with official rank, wealth, social position, or distinction of any kind. There are hundreds of princes and princesses who have not the right to appear at Court, and who would not be admitted into what is called in St. Petersburg “*la société*,” or indeed into refined society in any country.

The only genuine Russian title is Knyaz, commonly translated “Prince.” It is borne by the descendants of Rurik, of the Lithuanian Prince Ghedimin, and of the Tartar Khans and Murzi officially recognized by the Tsars. Besides these, there are fourteen families who have adopted it by Imperial command during the last two centuries. The titles of count and baron are modern importations, beginning with the time of Peter the Great. From Peter and his successors sixty-seven families have received the title of count and ten that of baron. The latter are all, with two exceptions, of foreign extraction, and are mostly descended from Court Bankers.*

There is a very common idea that Russian nobles are as a rule enormously rich. This is a mistake. The majority of them are poor. At the time of the Emancipation, in 1861, there were 100,247 landed proprietors, and of these, more than 41,000 were possessors of less than twenty-one male serfs—that is to say, were in a condition of poverty. A proprietor who was owner of 500 serfs was not considered as by any means very rich, and yet there were only 3,803 proprietors belonging to that category. There were a few, indeed, whose possessions were enormous. Count Sheremetief, for instance, possessed more than 150,000 male serfs,

* Besides these, there are of course the German counts and barons of the Baltic Provinces, who are Russian subjects.

or in other words more than 300,000 souls ; and at the present day Count Orloff-Davydof owns considerably more than half a million of acres. The Demidof family derive colossal revenues from their mines, and the Strógonofs have estates which, if put together, would be sufficient in extent to form a good-sized independent state in Western Europe. The very rich families, however, are not numerous. The lavish expenditure in which Russian nobles often indulge indicates too frequently not large fortune, but simply foolish ostentation and reckless improvidence. Of the present economic position of the proprietors I shall have more to say when I come to speak of serf-emancipation and its consequences.

Perhaps, after having spoken so much about the past history of the noblesse, I ought to endeavor to cast its horoscope, or at least to say something of its probable future. Though predictions are always hazardous, it is sometimes possible, by tracing the great lines of history in the past, to follow them for a little distance into the future. If it be allowable to apply this method of prediction in the present matter, I should say that the Russian Dvoryánstvo will assimilate with the other classes rather than form itself into an exclusive corporation. Hereditary aristocracies may be preserved—or at least their decomposition may be retarded—where they happen to exist, but it seems that they can no longer be created. In Western Europe there is a large amount of aristocratic sentiment, both in the nobles and in the people, but it exists in spite of, rather than in consequence of, actual social conditions. It is not a product of modern society, but an heirloom that has come down to us from feudal times, when power, wealth, and culture were in the hands of a privileged few. If there ever was in Russia a period corresponding to the feudal times in Western Europe it has long since been forgotten. There is very little aristocratic sentiment either in the people or in the nobles, and it is difficult to imagine any source from which it could now be derived. More than this, the nobles do not desire to make such an acquisition. In so far as they have any political aspirations they aim at securing the political liberty of the people as a whole, and not at acquiring exclusive rights and privileges for their own class.

In that section which I have called a social aristocracy there are a few individuals who desire to gain exclusive political influence

for the class to which they belong, but there is very little chance of their succeeding. If their desires were ever by chance realized, we should probably have a repetition of the scene which occurred in 1730. When in that year some of the great families raised the Duchess of Courland to the throne on condition of her ceding part of her power to a supreme council, the lower ranks of the noblesse compelled her to tear up the constitution which she had signed ! Those who dislike the autocratic power dislike the idea of an aristocratic oligarchy infinitely more. Nobles and people alike seem to hold instinctively the creed of the French philosopher who thought it better to be governed by a lion of good family than by a hundred rats of his own species.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SOCIAL CLASSES.

Do Social Classes or Castes exist in Russia?—Well-marked Social Types—Classes recognized by the Legislation and the Official Statistics—Origin and gradual Formation of these Classes—Peculiarity in the Historical Development of Russia—Political Life and Political Parties.

IN the preceding pages I have repeatedly used the expression “Social Classes,” and probably more than once the reader has felt inclined to ask, What are social classes in the Russian sense of the term? It may be well, therefore, before going further, to answer this question.

If the question were put to a Russian it is not at all unlikely that he would reply somewhat in this fashion: “In Russia there are no social classes, and there never have been any. That fact constitutes one of the most striking peculiarities of her historical development, and one of the surest foundations of her future greatness. We know nothing, and have never known anything, of those class-distinctions and class-enmities which in Western Europe have often shaken society to its basis, and imperil its existence in the future.”

This statement will not be readily accepted by the traveler who visits Russia with no preconceived ideas and forms his opinions from his own observations. To him it seems that class distinctions form one of the most prominent characteristics of Russian society. In a few days he learns to distinguish the various classes by their outward appearance. He easily recognizes the French-speaking nobles in West-European costume; the burly, bearded merchant in black cloth cap and long, shiny, double-breasted coat; the priest with his uncut hair and flowing robes; the peasant with his full, fair beard and unsavory, greasy sheep-skin. Meeting everywhere those well-marked types, he naturally assumes that Russian society is composed of exclusive castes; and this first impression will be

fully confirmed by a glance at the Code. Of the fifteen volumes which form the codified legislation, he finds that an entire volume—and by no means the smallest—is devoted to the rights and obligations of the various classes. From this he concludes that the classes have a legal as well as an actual existence. To make assurance doubly sure he turns to official statistics, and there he finds the following table:—

Hereditary nobles	..	..	..	..	..	652,887
Personal nobles	..	..	..	..	..	374,367
Clerical classes	..	..	..	..	..	695,905
Town classes	..	..	..	..	..	7,196,005
Rural classes	..	..	..	..	..	63,840,291
Military classes	..	..	..	..	..	4,767,703
Foreigners	..	..	..	..	..	153,135
						<hr/> 77,680,293*

Armed with these materials, the traveler goes to his Russian friends who have assured him that their country knows nothing of social classes. He is confident of being able to convince them that they have been laboring under a strange delusion, but he will be disappointed. They will tell him that these laws and statistics prove nothing, and that the classes therein mentioned are mere administrative fictions.

This apparent contradiction is to be explained by the equivocal meaning of the Russian terms *Sosloviya* and *Sostoyaniya*, which are commonly translated “social classes.” If by these terms are meant “castes” in the Oriental sense, then it may be confidently asserted that such do not exist in Russia. Between the nobles, the clergy, the burghers, and the peasants there is no distinction of race and no impassable barriers. The peasant often becomes a merchant, and there are many cases on record of peasants and sons of parish priests becoming nobles. Until very recently the parish clergy composed, as we have seen, a peculiar and exclusive class, with many of the characteristics of a caste; but this has been changed, and it may now be said that in Russia there are no castes in the Oriental sense.

* *Livron: Statistitcheskoe Obozrénie Rossiiskoi Imperii.* St. Petersburg, 1875. The above figures include the whole Empire.

If the word *Soslovié* be taken to mean an organized political unit with an *esprit de corps* and a clearly-conceived political aim, it may likewise be admitted that there are none in Russia. As there has been for centuries no political life among the subjects of the Tsars, there have been no political parties.

On the other hand, however, it is a piece of exaggeration to say that social classes have never existed in Russia, and that the categories which appear in the legislation and in the official statistics are mere administrative fictions.

From the very beginning of Russian history we can detect unmistakably the existence of social classes such as the Princes, the Boyárs, the armed followers of the princes, the peasantry, the slaves, and various others; and one of the oldest legal documents which we possess—the “Russian Right” (*Rússkaya Pravda*) of the Grand Prince Yaroslaff (1019—1054)—contains irrefragable proof, in the penalties attached to various crimes, that these classes were formally recognized by the legislation. Since that time the classes have frequently changed their character, but they have never at any period ceased to exist.

In ancient times, when there was very little administrative regulation, the classes had perhaps no clearly-defined boundaries, and the peculiarities which distinguished them from each other were actual, rather than legal—lying in the mode of life and social position rather than in peculiar obligations and privileges. But as the autocratic power developed and strove to transform the nation into a State with a highly-centralized administration, the legal element in the social distinctions became more and more prominent. For financial and other purposes the people had to be divided into various categories. The existing actual distinctions were of course taken as the basis of the legal classification, but the classifying had more than a merely formal significance. The necessity of clearly defining the different groups entailed the necessity of elevating and strengthening the barriers which already existed between them, and the difficulty of passing from one group to another was thereby increased. To take a concrete instance as an illustration: so long as there was no strict administrative supervision and regulation, a peasant might easily pass into the armed following of the prince, or an armed follower of the prince might become a simple peasant; but when the administrative regulation increased—especially when it became customary to tax persons

instead of property—this passing from one class to another could not be allowed without restriction, for it might diminish the obligations which the individual had to fulfill. Even when there was no diminution, but merely a change, of obligations, it could not always be permitted, because the movement might assume serious dimensions, and thereby disturb the equilibrium between the various classes. So at least thought the Tsars, and they accordingly came to adopt the general principle that no one should leave the class in which he had been born. All this we have already seen illustrated in the history of the parish clergy.

In this work of classification Peter the Great especially distinguished himself. With his insatiable passion for regulation, he raised formidable barriers between the different categories, and defined the obligations of each with microscopic minuteness. After his death the work was carried on in the same spirit, and the tendency reached its climax in the reign of Nicholas, when the number of students to be received in the universities was determined by Imperial ukaz !

It may seem strange to Englishmen that rulers should voluntarily take upon themselves the herculean task of regulating the relative numerical force of the different social classes, when it might be much better fulfilled by the principle of supply and demand, without legislative interference ; but it must be remembered that the Russian Government has always placed more confidence in bureaucratic wisdom than in the instincts and common sense of the people.

In the reign of Catherine a new element was introduced into the official conception of social classes. Down to her time the Government had thought merely of class-obligations ; under the influence of Western ideas she introduced the conception of class-rights. She wished, as we have seen, to have in her Empire a noblesse and a *tiers-état* like those which existed in France, and for this purpose she granted, first to the Dvoryanstvo and afterwards to the towns, an Imperial Charter, or Bill of Rights. Succeeding Sovereigns have acted in the same spirit, and the Code now confers on each class numerous privileges as well as numerous obligations.

Thus, we see, the oft-repeated assertion that the Russian social classes are simply artificial categories created by the legislation is to a certain extent true, but is by no means accurate. The social

groups, such as peasants, landed proprietors, and the like, came into existence in Russia, as in other countries, by the simple force of circumstances. The legislature merely recognized and developed the social distinctions which already existed. The legal status, obligations, and rights of each group were minutely defined and regulated, and legal barriers were added to the actual barriers which separated the groups from each other.

What is peculiar in the historical development of Russia is this: until lately she remained an almost exclusively agricultural Empire, with abundance of unoccupied land. Her history presents, therefore, few of those conflicts which result from the variety of social conditions and the intensified struggle for existence. Certain social groups were, indeed, formed in the course of time, but they were never allowed to fight out their own battles. The irresistible autocratic power kept them always in check and fashioned them into whatever form it thought proper, defining minutely and carefully their obligations, their rights, their mutual relations, and their respective positions in the political organization. Hence we find in the history of Russia almost no trace of those class-hatreds which appear so conspicuously in the history of Western Europe.*

The practical consequence of all this is that in Russia at the present day there is very little caste spirit or caste prejudice. We have already seen how the nobles and the recently emancipated peasantry work amicably together in the *Zemstvo*, and we shall meet with many similar curious facts when we come to study the history of the Emancipation. The confident anticipation of many Russians that their country will one day enjoy political life without political parties is, if not a contradiction in terms, at least a Utopian absurdity; but we may be sure that when political parties do appear they will be very different from those which exist in the countries with which we are better acquainted.

* This is, I believe, the true explanation of an important fact, which the Slavophiles endeavored to explain by an ill-authenticated legend (*vide supra*, p. 184).

CHAPTER XIX.

AMONG THE HERETICS.

The Volga—Samara—The Molokani—My Method of Investigation—Alexandrof-Haï—An Unexpected Theological Discussion—Doctrine and Ecclesiastical Organization of the Molokani—Moral Supervision and Mutual Assistance—History of the Sect—A False Prophet—Utilitarian Christianity—Classification of the Fantastic Sects—The Khlysti—Policy of the Government towards Sectarianism—Two Kinds of Heresy—Probable Future of the Heretical Sects—Political Disaffection.

THE Volga, as I have already said, is not on the whole a strikingly picturesque river. The country on the left bank is flat and marshy, and the right bank, though high and occasionally steep, is tame in outline and monotonous in color. On both banks there is an abundance of trees, but they do not group themselves as a landscape-painter would desire, and do not remove the prevailing impression of bareness. If you have been duly warned not to expect much in the way of scenery, you may think, during the first hour or two on board the steamer, that the panorama, though tame, is pretty and pleasing; but when you have gazed on it for an entire day, you come to regard it as intensely monotonous, and take refuge in reading, card-playing, or some other amusement.

There are, however, a few points on the Volga which are interesting enough to make you lay down your book or your cards, and among these points the first place must be given to the Zhiguli Hills, lying about half-way between Kasán and Sarátov. They have a considerable local reputation, and I have heard a Frenchman enthusiastically describe them as "magnifiques." I do not think that an Englishman would venture to apply to them a stronger word than "pretty," but pretty they undoubtedly are. Though they are not high enough to obtain a place on ordinary maps, they are fine in form, and the left bank rises to do them

honor, so that for a little time we have the sensation of passing through a hilly country. Then they gradually retreat from the river, and we see before us on the left bank a long straggling town, with one well-marked feature—a huge square church, with a bright green roof, surmounted by the ordinary pear-shaped cupolas. This is Samara, the chief town of the province or “Government” of that name.

Samara is a new town, a child of the present century, and recalls by its unfinished appearance the new towns of America. Most of the houses are of wood. The streets are still in such a primitive condition that after rain they are almost impassable from mud, and in dry, gusty weather they generate thick clouds of blinding, suffocating dust. Once during my stay there I witnessed a dust-hurricane, during which it was impossible at certain moments to see from the hotel window the houses on the other side of the street! Amidst such primitive surroundings the colossal new church seems a little out of keeping, and we involuntarily think, as we gaze at it, that some of the money expended on its construction might have been more profitably employed. But the Russians have their own ideas of the fitness of things. They are, in all that regards externals, extremely religious, and subscribe money liberally for ecclesiastical purposes. Besides this, the Government considers that every chief town of a province should possess a cathedral.

In its early days Samara was one of the outposts of Russian colonization, and had often to take precautions against the raids of the nomadic tribes living in its vicinity; but the agricultural frontier has since been pushed far forward to the east and south, and the province is now one of the most productive in the Empire. The town is the chief market of this region, and therein lies its importance. The grain is brought in by the peasants from great distances, and stored in large granaries by the wholesale merchants, who send it thence to Moscow and St. Petersburg by water and by rail. In former days this was a very tedious operation. The boats containing the grain were towed by horses or stout peasants up the rivers and along the canals for hundreds of miles. Then came the period of “cabestans” — unwieldy machines propelled by means of anchors and a windlass. Now the transport is effected in a much more expeditious way. The grain is put on board of gigantic barges, which are towed up the

river by powerful tug-steamers to some point connected with the great network of railways.

When the traveler has visited the cathedral and the granaries he has seen all the lions—not very formidable lions, truly—of the place. He may then visit the two “koomuis’s” establishments pleasantly situated near the town. He will there find a considerable number of consumptive and other patients, who drink enormous quantities of fermented mares’-milk (koomuis’s), and who declare that they derive great benefit from this new health-restorer. When I had done all this I felt that I had fulfilled the whole duty of a tourist, and set myself to my regular work, which consisted in collecting information regarding the economic condition of the province, and especially the condition of the emancipated peasantry.

Whilst engaged in this occupation I heard a great deal about a peculiar religious sect called the Molokáni, and I felt interested in them because their religious belief, whatever it was, seemed to have a beneficial influence on their material welfare. Of the same race and placed in the same conditions as the Orthodox peasantry around them, they were undoubtedly better housed, better clad, more punctual in the payment of their taxes, and, in a word, more prosperous. All my informants agreed in describing them as quiet, decent, sober people; but regarding their religious doctrines the evidence was vague and contradictory. Some described them as Protestants or Lutherans, whilst others believed them to be the last remnants of a curious heretical sect which existed in the early Christian Church. One gentleman ventured to assure me that their doctrine was a modified form of Manichæism, but I did not put much confidence in his opinion, for I found by questioning him that he knew of Manichæism nothing but the name.

Desirous of obtaining clear notions on the subject, I determined to investigate the matter for myself. At first I found this to be no easy task. I had little difficulty in making the acquaintance of a rich Molokán who lived in the town, and I so far gained his confidence that he promised me something that would serve as a letter of introduction to the leading members of the sect in the villages which I intended to visit; but on reflection he changed his mind, and failed to keep his promise. In the villages through which I passed I found numerous members of the sect, but they

all showed a decided repugnance to speak about their religious beliefs. Long accustomed to extortion and persecution at the hands of the Administration, and suspecting me to be a secret agent of the Government, they carefully avoided speaking on any subject beyond the state of the weather and the prospects of the harvest, and replied to my questions on other topics as if they had been standing before a Grand Inquisitor.

A few unsuccessful attempts convinced me that it would be impossible to extract from them their religious beliefs by direct questioning. I adopted, therefore, a different line of policy. From meagre replies already received I had discovered that their doctrine had at least a superficial resemblance to Presbyterianism, and from former experience I was aware that the curiosity of intelligent Russian peasants is easily excited by descriptions of foreign countries. These two facts I took as the basis of my strategy. When I found a Molokán, or some one whom I suspected to be such, I talked for some time about the weather and the crops as if I had no ulterior object in view. Having fully discussed this matter, I led the conversation gradually from the weather and crops in Russia to the weather and crops in Scotland, and then passed slowly from Scotch agriculture to the Scotch Presbyterian Church. On nearly every occasion this policy succeeded. When the peasant heard that there is a country where the people interpret the Scriptures for themselves, have no bishops, and consider the veneration of Icons as idolatry, he invariably listened with profound attention; and when he learned further that in that wonderful country the parishes annually send deputies to an assembly in which all matters pertaining to the Church are freely and publicly discussed, he almost always gave free expression to his astonishment, and I had to answer a whole volley of questions. "Where is that country?" "Is it to the east, or the west?" "Is it very far away?" "If our Presbyter could only hear all that!"

This last expression was precisely what I wanted, because it gave me an opportunity of making the acquaintance of the Presbyter or pastor without seeming to desire it; and I knew that a conversation with that personage, who is always an uneducated peasant like the others, but is generally more intelligent and better acquainted with religious doctrine, would certainly be of use to me. On more than one occasion I spent a great part of the

night with a Presbyter, and thereby learned much concerning the religious beliefs and practices of the sect. After these interviews I was sure to be treated with confidence and respect by all the Molokáns in the village, and recommended to the brethren of the faith in the neighboring villages through which I intended to pass. Several of the more intelligent peasants with whom I spoke advised me strongly to visit Alexandrof-IIaï, a village situated on the borders of the Kirghis Steppe. "We are dark (*i. e.*, ignorant) people here," they were wont to say, "and do not know anything, but in Alexandrof-IIaï you will find those who know the faith, and they will discuss with you." This prediction was fulfilled in a somewhat unexpected way.

When returning some weeks later from a visit to the Kirghis of the Inner Horde, I arrived one evening at this center of the Molokán faith, and was hospitably received by one of the brotherhood. In conversing casually with my host on religious subjects I expressed to him a desire to find some one well read in Holy Writ and well grounded in the faith, and he promised to do what he could for me in this respect. Next morning he kept his promise with a vengeance. Immediately after the tea-urn had been removed, the door of the room was opened, and twelve peasants were ushered in! After the customary salutations with these unexpected visitors, my host informed me to my astonishment that his friends had come to have a talk with me about the faith; and without further ceremony he placed before me a folio Bible in the Slavonic tongue, in order that I might read passages in support of my arguments. As I was not at all prepared to open a formal theological discussion, I felt not a little embarrassed by this procedure, and I could see that my traveling companions, two Russian friends who cared for none of these things, were thoroughly enjoying my discomfiture. There was, however, no possibility of drawing back. I had asked for an opportunity of having a talk with some of the brethren, and now I had got it in a way that I certainly did not expect. My friends withdrew—"leaving me to my fate," as they whispered to me—and the "talk" began.

My fate was by no means so terrible as had been anticipated, but at first the situation was a little awkward. Neither party had any clear ideas as to what the other desired, and my visitors expected that I was to begin the proceedings. This expectation

was quite natural and justifiable, for I had inadvertently invited them to meet me, but I could not make a speech to them, for the best of all reasons—that I did not know what to say. If I told them my real aims, their suspicions would probably be aroused. My usual stratagem of the weather and the crops was wholly inapplicable. For a moment I thought of proposing that a psalm should be sung as a means of breaking the ice, but I felt that this would give to the meeting a solemnity which I wished to avoid. On the whole it seemed best to begin at once a formal discussion. I told them, therefore, that I had spoken with many of their brethren in various villages, and that I had found what I considered grave errors of doctrine. I could not, for instance, agree with them in their belief that it was unlawful to eat pork. This was perhaps an abrupt way of entering on the subject, but it furnished at least a *locus standi*—something to talk about—and an animated discussion immediately ensued. My opponents first endeavored to prove their thesis from the New Testament, and when this argument broke down, they had recourse to the Pentateuch. From a particular article of the ceremonial law we passed to the broader question as to how far the ceremonial law is still binding, and from this to other points equally important. If the logic of the peasants was not always unimpeachable, their knowledge of the Scriptures left nothing to be desired. In support of their views they quoted long passages from memory, and whenever I indicated vaguely any text which I needed, they at once supplied it verbatim, so that the big folio Bible served merely as an ornament. Three or four of them seemed to know the whole of the New Testament by heart. The course of our informal debate need not here be described ; suffice it to say that, after four hours of uninterrupted conversation, we agreed to differ on questions of detail, and parted from each other without a trace of that ill-feeling which religious discussion commonly engenders. Never have I met men more honest and courteous in debate, more earnest in the search after truth, and more careless of dialectical triumphs than these simple, uneducated peasants. If at one or two points in the discussion a little undue warmth was displayed, I must do my opponents the justice to say that they were not the offending party.

This long discussion, as well as numerous discussions which I had before and since with Presbyters and simple members in

various parts of the country, confirmed my first impression that the doctrines of the Molokáni have a strong resemblance to Presbyterianism. There is, however, an important difference. Presbyterianism has an ecclesiastical organization and a written creed, and its doctrines have long since become clearly defined by means of public discussion, polemical literature, and general assemblies. The Molokáni, on the contrary, have had no means of developing their fundamental principles and forming their vague religious beliefs into a clearly-defined logical system. Their theology is, therefore, still in a half-fluid state, so that it is impossible to predict what form it will ultimately assume. "We have not yet thought about that," I have frequently been told when I inquired about some abstruse doctrine; "we must talk about it at the meeting next Sunday. What is your opinion?" Besides this, their fundamental principles allow great latitude for individual and local differences of opinion. They hold that Holy Writ is the only rule of faith and conduct, but that it must be taken in the spiritual, and not in the literal, sense. As there is no terrestrial authority to which doubtful points can be referred, each individual is free to adopt the interpretation which commends itself to his own judgment. This will no doubt ultimately lead to a variety of sects, and already there is considerable diversity of opinion between different communities; but this diversity has not yet been recognized, and I may say that I nowhere found that fanatically dogmatic, quibbling spirit, which is the soul of sectarianism.

For their ecclesiastical organization the Molokáni take as their model the early Apostolic Church, as depicted in the New Testament, and uncompromisingly reject all later authorities. In accordance with this model they have no hierarchy and no paid clergy, but choose from among themselves a Presbyter and two assistants—men well known among the brethren for their exemplary life and their knowledge of the Scriptures—whose duty it is to watch over the religious and moral welfare of the flock. On Sundays they hold meetings in private houses—they are not allowed to build churches—and spend two or three hours in psalm-singing, prayer, reading the Scriptures, and friendly conversation on religious subjects. If any one has a doctrinal difficulty which he desires to have cleared up, he states it to the congregation, and some of the others give their opinions, with the texts on which

the opinions are founded. If the question seems clearly solved by the texts, it is decided ; if not, it is left open.

As in many young sects, there exists among the Molokáni a system of severe moral supervision. If a member has been guilty of drunkenness or any act unbecoming a Christian, he is first admonished by the Presbyter in private or before the congregation ; and if this does not produce the desired effect, he is excluded for a longer or shorter period from the meetings and from all intercourse with the members. In extreme cases expulsion is resorted to. On the other hand, if any one of the members happens to be, from no fault of his own, in pecuniary difficulties, the others will assist him. This system of mutual control and mutual assistance has no doubt something to do with the fact that the Molokáni are always distinguished from the surrounding population by their sobriety, uprightness, and material prosperity.

Of the history and actual strength of the Molokán sect very little is known. Some believe that it was founded by foreign Protestants in the sixteenth century, but they can produce nothing better than vague traditions in support of their opinion. The oldest documentary evidence regarding it is, so far as I am aware, an official paper of the time of Catherine II. As to its actual strength it is difficult to form even a conjecture. Certainly it has many thousand members—probably several hundred thousands. Formerly the Government transported them from the central provinces to the thinly-populated outlying districts, where they had less opportunity of contaminating Orthodox neighbors ; and accordingly we find them in the south-eastern districts of Samára, on the north coast of the Sea of Azof, in the Crimea, in the Caucasus, and in Siberia. There are still, however, very many of them in the central region, especially in the province of Tambóf.

The readiness with which the Molokáni modify their opinions and beliefs in accordance with what seems to them new light, saves them effectually from bigotry and fanaticism, but it at the same time exposes them to evils of a different kind, from which they might be preserved by a few stubborn prejudices. “False prophets arise among us,” said an old, sober-minded member to me on one occasion, “and lead many away from the faith.” Of these false prophets the most remarkable in recent times was a man who called himself Ivan Grigorief, a mysterious personage,

who had at one time a Turkish and at another an American passport, but who seemed in all other respects a genuine Russian. Some years ago he appeared at Alexandrof-Haï. Though he professed himself to be a good Molokán and was received as such, he enounced at the weekly meetings many new and startling ideas. At first he simply urged his hearers to live like the early Christians, and have all things in common. This seemed sound doctrine to the Molokáni, who profess to take the early Christians as their model, and some of them thought of at once abolishing personal property; but when the teacher intimated pretty plainly that this communism should include free love, a decided opposition arose, and it was objected that the early Church did not recommend wholesale adultery and cognate sins. This was a formidable objection, but "the prophet" was equal to the occasion. He reminded his friends that in accordance with their own doctrine the Scriptures should be understood not in the literal, but in the spiritual, sense—that Christianity had made men free, and every true Christian ought to use his freedom. "All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient"—that is to say, we ought to be guided in our acts simply by expediency, and all objections to a project on the ground of its being unlawful must fall to the ground. He who allows himself to be restrained by law is no true Christian.

This account of the new doctrine was given to me by an intelligent Molokán, who had formerly been a peasant and was now a trader, as I sat one evening in his house in Novo-usensk, the chief town of the district in which Alexandrof-Haï is situated. It seemed to me that the author of this ingenious attempt to conciliate Christianity with extreme Utilitarianism must be an educated man in disguise. This conviction I communicated to my host, but he did not agree with me.

"No, I think not," he replied; "in fact, I am sure he is a peasant, and I strongly suspect he was at some time a soldier. He has not much learning, but he has a wonderful gift of talking. Never have I heard any one speak like him. He would have talked over the whole village, had it not been for an old man who was more than a match for him. And then he went to Orloff-Haï, and there he did talk the people over." What he really did in this latter place I never could clearly ascertain. Report said that he founded a communistic association, of which he was him-

self president and treasurer, and converted the members to an extraordinary theory of prophetic succession, invented apparently for his own sensual gratification. For further information my host advised me to apply either to the prophet himself, who was at that time confined in the jail on a charge of using a forged passport, or to one of his friends, a certain Mr. I——, who lived in the town. As it was a difficult matter to gain admittance to the prisoner, and I had little time at my disposal, I adopted the latter alternative.

Mr. I—— was himself a somewhat curious character. He had been a student in Moscow, and in consequence of some youthful indiscretions during the University disturbances, of which I have already spoken, had been exiled to this place. After waiting in vain some years for a release, he gave up the idea of entering one of the learned professions, married a peasant-girl, rented a piece of land, bought a pair of camels, and settled down as a small farmer.* He had a great deal to tell about the prophet.

Ivan Grigorief, it seemed, was really a simple Russian peasant, but he had been from his youth upwards one of those restless people who can never long work in harness. Where his native place was, and why he left it, he never divulged, for reasons best known to himself. He had traveled much, and had been an attentive observer. Whether he had ever been in America was doubtful, but he had certainly been in Turkey, and had fraternized with various Russian sectarians, who are to be found in considerable numbers near the Danube. Here, probably, he acquired many of his peculiar religious ideas, and conceived his grand scheme of founding a new religion—of rivaling the Founder of Christianity! He aimed at nothing less than this, as he on one occasion confessed, and he did not see why he should not be successful. He believed that the Founder of Christianity had been simply a man like himself, who understood better than others the people around him and the circumstances of the time, and he was convinced that he himself had these qualifications. One qualification, however, for becoming a prophet he certainly did not possess: he had no genuine religious enthusiasm in him—nothing of

* Here for the first time I saw camels used for agricultural purposes. When yoked to a small four-wheeled cart, the "ships of the desert" seemed decidedly out of place.

the martyr spirit about him. Much of his own preaching he did not himself believe, and he seemed to have a certain contempt for those who naïvely accepted it all. Not only was he cunning, but he knew he was cunning, and he was conscious that he was playing an assumed part. And yet perhaps it would be unjust to say that he was merely an impostor exclusively occupied with his own personal advantage. Though he was naturally a man of sensual tastes, and could not resist convenient opportunities of gratifying them, he seemed to believe that his communistic schemes would, if realized, be beneficial not only to himself, but also to the people. Altogether a curious mixture of the prophet, the social reformer, and the cunning impostor ! Whether he may ever again set up as prophet it is impossible to say, but certainly he has no chance of again succeeding among the Molokáni of the province of Samara.

Besides the Molokáni, there are in Russia many other heretical sects. Some of them are simply evangelical Protestants, like the "Stundisti," who have adopted the religious conceptions of their neighbors, the German colonists, whilst others are composed of wild enthusiasts, who give a loose rein to their excited imagination, and revel in what the Germans aptly term "*der höhere Blödsinn*." I cannot here attempt to convey even a general idea of these fantastic sects with their doctrinal and ceremonial absurdities, but I may offer the following classification of them for the benefit of those who may desire to study the subject :—

1. Sects which take the Scriptures as the basis of their belief, but interpret and complete the doctrines therein contained by means of the occasional inspiration or internal enlightenment of their leading members.
2. Sects which pay little or no attention to Scripture, and derive their doctrine from the supposed inspiration of their living teachers.
3. Sects which believe in the re-incarnation of Christ.
4. Sects which confound religion with nervous excitement, and are more or less erotic in their character. The excitement necessary for prophesying is commonly produced by dancing, jumping, pirouetting, or self-castigation, and the absurdities spoken at such times are regarded as the direct expression of divine wisdom. The religious exercises resemble more or less closely those of the "Dancing Dervishes," with which all who have visited Con-

stantinople are familiar. There is, however, one important difference: the Dervishes practise their religious exercises in public, and consequently observe a certain decorum, whilst these Russian sects assemble in secret, and give free scope to their excitement, so that most disgusting orgies sometimes take place at their meetings. In one of the best known of these sects—the Skoptsi or Eunuchs—fanaticism has led to physical mutilation.

To illustrate the general character of the sects belonging to this last category, I may quote here a short extract from a description of the “*Khlysti*” by one who was initiated into their mysteries:—“Among them men and women alike take upon themselves the calling of teachers and prophets, and in this character they lead a strict, ascetic life, refrain from the most ordinary and innocent pleasures, exhaust themselves by long fasting and wild, ecstatic religious exercises, and abhor marriage. Under the excitement caused by their supposed holiness and inspiration, they call themselves not only teachers and prophets, but also ‘Saviours,’ ‘Redeemers,’ ‘Christs,’ ‘Mothers of God.’ Generally speaking, they call themselves simply Gods, and pray to each other as to real Gods and living Christs or Madonnas. When several of these teachers come together at a meeting, they dispute with each other in a vain, boasting way as to which of them possesses most grace and power. In this rivalry they sometimes give each other lusty blows on the ear, and he who bears the blows most patiently, turning the other cheek to the assailant, acquires the reputation of having most holiness.”

Another sect belonging to this category is the Jumpers, among whom the erotic element is disagreeably prominent. Here is a description of their religious meetings, which are held during summer in the forest, and during winter in some outlying house or barn:—“After due preparation prayers are read by the chief teacher, dressed in a white robe and standing in the midst of the congregation. At first he reads in an ordinary tone of voice, and then passes gradually into a merry chant. When he remarks that the chanting has sufficiently acted on the hearers, he begins to jump. The hearers, singing likewise, follow his example. Their ever-increasing excitement finds expression in the highest possible jumps. This they continue as long as possible—men and women alike yelling like enraged savages. When all are thoroughly exhausted, the leader declares that he hears the angels singing”—

and here begins a scene which cannot be here described. Indeed, it may be remarked in general that in many of the sects the erotic element plays such a prominent part, that it is impossible to describe their ceremonies in a work intended for the general public.

It is but fair to add that we know very little of these peculiar sects, and what we do know is furnished by professed enemies. It is very possible, therefore, that some of them are not nearly so absurd as they are commonly represented, and that many of the stories told are mere calumnies. Certain sects, for instance, are accused of killing children and using the blood of the victim for sacramental purposes; but this has never been satisfactorily proved, and we know that the same accusation was made by pagan writers against the early Christians. My own efforts to investigate in this field by personal observation were, I must confess, entirely fruitless.

The Government is very hostile to sectarianism, and occasionally endeavors to suppress it. This is natural enough as regards these fantastic sects, but it seems strange that the peaceful, industrious, honest Molokáni and Stundisti should be put under the ban. Why is it that a Russian peasant should be punished for holding doctrines which are openly professed with the sanction of the authorities by his neighbors, the German colonists?

To understand this the reader must know that according to Russian conceptions there are two distinct kinds of heresy, distinguished from each other not by the doctrines held, but by the nationality of the holder. It seems to a Russian in the nature of things that Tartars should be Mahometans, that Poles should be Roman Catholics, and that Germans should be Protestants; and the mere act of becoming a Russian subject is not supposed to lay the Tartar, the Pole, or the German under any obligation to change his faith. These nationalities are therefore allowed the most perfect freedom in the exercise of their respective religions, so long as they refrain from disturbing by propagandism the divinely-established order of things. This is the received theory, and we must do the Russians the justice to say that they habitually act up to it. If the Government has sometimes attempted to convert alien races, the motive has always been political, and the efforts have never awakened much sympathy among the people at large, or even among the clergy. In like manner the missionary societies which have sometimes been formed in imitation of the

Western nations have never received much popular support. Thus with regard to aliens this peculiar theory has led to very extensive religious toleration. Tartars, Poles, and Germans are in a certain sense heretics, but their heresy is natural and justifiable. With regard to the Russians themselves the theory has had a very different effect. If in the nature of things the Tartar is a Mahometan, the Pole a Roman Catholic, and the German a Protestant, it is equally in the nature of things that the Russian should be a member of the Orthodox Church. On this point the written law and public opinion are in perfect accord. If an Orthodox Russian becomes a Roman Catholic or a Protestant, his heresy is not of the same kind as that of the Pole or the German. No matter how pure and elevated his motives may be, his change of religion is not justifiable; on the contrary, he is amenable to the criminal law, and is at the same time condemned by public opinion as an apostate—almost as a traitor.

As to the future of these heretical sects it is impossible to speak with confidence. The more gross and fantastic will probably disappear as primary education spreads among the people, but the Protestant sects seem to possess much more vitality. For the present, at least, they are rapidly spreading. I have seen large villages where, according to the testimony of the inhabitants, there was not a single heretic fifteen years ago, and where now one-half of the population are Molokáni; and this change has taken place without any propagandist organization. The civil and ecclesiastical authorities are well aware of the existence of the movement, but they are powerless to prevent it. The few efforts which they made have been without effect, or worse than useless. Among the Stundisti corporal punishment has been tried as an antidote—without the concurrence, it is to be hoped, of the central authorities—and to the Molokáni of the province of Samára a learned monk was sent in the hope of converting them from their errors by reason and eloquence. What effect the birch-twigs had on the religious convictions of the Stundisti I have not been able to ascertain, but I assume that they were not very efficacious, for according to the latest accounts the numbers of the sect are increasing. Of the mission in the province of Samára I happened to know more, and can state on the evidence of many peasants—some of them Orthodox—that the only immediate effect was to stir up religious fanaticism, and to induce a certain number of

Orthodox to go over to the heretical camp. In the public discussions the disputants could find no common ground on which to argue, for the simple reason that their fundamental conceptions were different. The monk spoke of the Church as the terrestrial representative of Christ and the sole possessor of truth, whilst his opponents knew nothing of a Church in this sense, and held simply that all men should live in accordance with the dictates of Scripture. Once the monk consented to argue with them on their own ground, but on that occasion he sustained a signal defeat, for he could not produce a single passage recommending the veneration of Icons—a practice which the Russian peasants consider an essential part of Orthodoxy. After this he always insisted on the authority of the early Ecumenical Councils and the fathers of the Church—an authority which his antagonists did not recognize. Altogether the mission was a complete failure, and all parties regretted that it had been undertaken. “It was a great mistake,” remarked to me confidentially an Orthodox peasant—“a very great mistake! The Molokáni are a cunning people. The monk was no match for them; they knew the Scriptures a great deal better than he did. The Church should not condescend to discuss with heretics.”

It is often said that these heretical sects are politically disaffected, and the Molokáni are thought to be specially dangerous in this respect. Perhaps there is a certain foundation for this opinion, for men are naturally disposed to doubt the legitimacy of a power that systematically persecutes them; but it may be confidently affirmed that any fanaticism of this kind which may have formerly existed has lost its significance now that active persecution is no longer in fashion. With regard to the Molokáni I believe the accusation to be a groundless calumny. Political ideas seem entirely foreign to their modes of thought. During my intercourse with them I have often heard them speak of the police as “wolves which have to be fed,” but I have never heard them speak of the Emperor otherwise than in terms of filial affection and veneration.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DISSENTERS.

Dissenters not to be confounded with Heretics—Extreme Importance attached to Ritual Observances—The Raskól, or Great Schism in the Seventeenth Century—Antichrist appears!—Policy of Peter the Great and Catherine II.—Present Ingenious Method of securing Religious Toleration—Internal Development of the Raskól—Schism among the Schismatics—The Old Ritualists—The Priestless People—Cooling of the Fanatical Enthusiasm and Formation of New Sects—Recent Policy of the Government towards the Sectarrians—Numerical Force and Political Significance of Sectarianism.

WE must be careful not to confound those heretical sects, Protestant and Fantastical, of which I have spoken in the preceding chapter, with the more numerous Dissenters and Schismatics, the descendants of those who seceded from the Russian Church—or more correctly from whom the Russian Church seceded—in the seventeenth century. So far from regarding themselves as heretics, these latter consider themselves more orthodox than the official Orthodox Church. They are conservatives, too, in the social as well as the religious sense of the term. Among them are to be found the last remnants of old Russian life, untinged by foreign influences.

The Russian Church, as I have already had occasion to remark, has always paid inordinate attention to ceremonial observances and somewhat neglected the doctrinal and moral elements of the faith which it professes. This peculiarity greatly facilitated the spread of its influence among a people accustomed to pagan rites and magical incantations, but it had the pernicious effect of confirming in the new converts the superstitious belief in the virtue of mere ceremonies. Thus the Russians became zealous Christians in all matters of external observance without knowing much about the spiritual meaning of the rites which they practiced. They looked upon the rites and sacraments as mysterious charms which

preserved them from evil influences in the present life and secured them eternal felicity in the life to come, and they believed that these charms would inevitably lose their efficacy if modified in the slightest degree. Extreme importance was therefore attached to the ritual minutiae, and the slightest modification of these minutiae assumed the importance of an historical event. In the year 1476, for instance, the Novgorodian Chronicler gravely relates:—"This winter some philosophers (!) began to sing, 'O Lord, have mercy,' and others merely, 'Lord, have mercy.'" And this attaching of enormous importance to trifles was not confined to the ignorant multitude. An Archbishop of Novgorod declared solemnly that those who repeated the word "Allelujah" only twice at certain points in the liturgy "sing to their own damnation;" and a celebrated Ecclesiastical Council, held in 1551, put such matters as the position of the fingers when making the sign of the cross on the same level as heresies—formally anathematizing those who acted in such trifles contrary to its decisions.

This conservative spirit in religious concerns had a considerable influence on social life. As there was no clear line of demarcation between religious observances and simple traditional customs, the most ordinary act might receive a religious significance, and the slightest departure from a traditional custom might be looked upon as a deadly sin. An old Russian would have resisted the attempt to deprive him of his beard as strenuously as a Calvinist of the present day would resist the attempt to make him abjure the doctrine of Predestination—and both for the same reason. As the doctrine of Predestination is for the Calvinist, so the wearing of a beard was for the old Russian—an essential of salvation. "Where," asked one of the Patriarchs of Moscow, "will those who shave their chins stand at the Last Day?—among the righteous adorned with beards or among the beardless heretics?" The question required of course no answer.

In the seventeenth century this superstitious, conservative spirit reached its climax. The civil wars and foreign invasions, accompanied by pillage, famine, and plagues with which that century opened, produced a wide-spread conviction that the end of all things was at hand. The mysterious number of the Beast was found to indicate the year 1666, and timid souls began to discover signs of falling away from the Faith which is spoken of in the Apocalypse. The majority of the people did not perhaps share

this notion, but they believed that the sufferings with which they had been visited were a Divine punishment for having forsaken the ancient customs. And it could not be denied that considerable changes had taken place. Orthodox Russia was now tainted with the presence of heretics. Foreigners who shaved their chins and smoked the accursed weed had been allowed to settle in Moscow, and the Tsars not only held converse with them, but had even adopted some of their "pagan" practices. Besides this, the Government had introduced innovations and reforms, many of which were displeasing to the people. Thus the country was polluted with "heresy"—a subtle, evil influence lurking in everything foreign, and very dangerous to the spiritual and temporal welfare of the Faithful—something of the nature of an epidemic, but infinitely more dangerous, for disease kills merely the body, whereas "heresy" kills the soul, and causes both soul and body to be cast into hell-fire.

Had the Government continued to introduce the innovations slowly and cautiously, respecting as far as possible all outward forms, it might have effected much without producing a religious panic; but, instead of acting circumspectly as the occasion demanded, it ran full-tilt against the ancient prejudices and superstitious fears, and drove the people into open resistance. When the art of printing was introduced, it became necessary to choose the best texts of the Liturgy, Psalter, and other religious books, and on examination it was found that, through the ignorance and carelessness of copyists, numerous errors had crept into the manuscripts in use. This discovery led to further investigation, which showed that certain irregularities had likewise crept into the ceremonial. The chief of the clerical errors lay in the orthography of the word "Jesus," and the chief irregularity in the ceremonial regarded the position of the fingers when making the sign of the cross. In order to correct these errors, the celebrated Nikon, who was then Patriarch, ordered all the old liturgical books and the old Icons to be called in, and new ones to be distributed; but the clergy and the people resisted. Believing these "Nikonian novelties" to be heretical, they clung to their old Icons, their old missals, and their old religious customs, as the sole anchors of safety which could save the Faithful from drifting to perdition. In vain the Patriarch assured the people that the change was a return to the ancient forms still preserved in Greece and Constantinople. "The

Greek Church," it was replied, "is no longer free from heresy : Orthodoxy has become many-colored from the violence of the Turkish Mahomet ; and the Greeks, under the sons of Hagar, have fallen away from the ancient traditions." An anathema, formally pronounced by an Ecclesiastical Council against these Nonconformists, had no more effect than the admonitions of the Patriarch. They persevered in their obstinacy, and refused to believe that the blessed saints and holy martyrs who had used the ancient forms had not prayed and crossed themselves aright. "Not those holy men of old, but the present Patriarch and his councilors must be heretics." "Woe to us ! Woe to us !" cried the monks of Solovetsk when they received the new liturgies. "What have you done with the Son of God ? Give Him back to us ! You have changed Isus (the old Russian form of Jesus) into Iisus ! It is fearful not only to commit such a sin, but even to think of it !" And the sturdy monks shut their gates, and defied the Patriarch, Council, and Tsar for seven long years, till the monastery was taken by an armed force.

The decree of excommunication pronounced by the Ecclesiastical Council placed the Nonconformists beyond the pale of the Church, and the civil power undertook the task of persecuting them. Persecution had of course merely the effect of confirming the victims in their belief that the Church and Tsar had become heretical. Thousands fled across the frontier and settled in the neighboring countries—Poland, Prussia, Sweden, Austria, Turkey, the Caucasus, and Siberia. Others concealed themselves in the northern forests, and in the densely-wooded region near the Polish frontier, where they lived by agriculture or fishing, and prayed, crossed themselves, and buried their dead according to the customs of their forefathers. The northern forests were their favorite place of refuge. Hither flocked many of those who wished to keep themselves pure and undefiled. Here the more learned men among the Nonconformists—well acquainted with Holy Writ, with fragmentary translations from the Greek Fathers, and with the more important decisions of the early Ecumenical Councils—wrote polemical and edifying works for the confounding of heretics and the confirming of true believers. Hence were sent out in all directions zealous missionaries, in the guise of traders, peddlers, and laborers, to sow what they called the living seed, and what the official Church termed "Satan's tares." When the Government

agents discovered these retreats, the inmates generally fled from the "ravenous wolves;" but on more than one occasion a large number of fanatical men and women, shutting themselves up, set fire to their houses, and voluntarily perished in the flames. In Paleostrofski Monastery, for instance, in the year 1687, no less than 2,700 fanatics gained the crown of martyrdom in this way; and many similar instances are on record.* As in all periods of religious panic, the Apocalypse was carefully studied, and the millennial ideas rapidly spread. The signs of the time were plain. Satan was being let loose for a little season. Men anxiously looked for the appearance of Antichrist—and Antichrist appeared.

The man in whom the people recognized the incarnate spirit of evil was no other than Peter the Great.

From the Nonconformist point of view, Peter had very strong claims to be considered Antichrist. He had none of the staid, pious demeanor of the old Tsars, and showed no respect for what was chiefly venerated by the people. He ate, drank, and habitually associated with heretics, spoke their language, wore their costume, chose from among them his most intimate friends, and favored them more than his own people. Imagine the horror and commotion which would be produced among pious Catholics if the Pope should some day appear in the costume of the Grand Turk, and should choose Pashas as his chief councilors! The horror which Peter's conduct produced among a large section of his subjects was probably not less great. They could not explain it otherwise than by supposing him to be the Devil in disguise, and they saw in all his important measures convincing proofs of his Satanic origin. The newly-invented census, or "revision," was a profane "numbering of the people," and an attempt to enrol in the service of Beelzebub those whose names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life. The new title of Imperator was explained to mean something very diabolical. The passport bearing the Imperial arms was the seal of Antichrist. The order to shave the beard was an attempt to disfigure "the image of God," after which man had been created, and by which Christ would recognize His own at the Last Day. The change in the calendar,

* A list of well-authenticated cases is given by Nilski, "*Seméinaya zhizn v russkom Raskólê*," St. Petersburg, 1869, part I., pp. 55-57. The number of these self-immolators certainly amounted to many thousands.

by which New Year's Day was transferred from September to January, was the destruction of "the years of our Lord," and the introduction of the years of Satan in their place. Of the ingenious arguments by which these theses were supported, I may quote one by way of illustration. The world, it was explained, could not have been created in January, as the new calendar seemed to indicate, because apples are not ripe at that season, and consequently Eve could not have been tempted in the way described!

These ideas regarding Peter and his reforms were strongly confirmed by the vigorous persecutions which took place during the earlier years of his reign. The Nonconformists were constantly convicted of political disaffection—especially of "insulting the Imperial Majesty"—and were accordingly flogged, tortured, and beheaded without mercy. But when Peter had succeeded in putting down all armed opposition, and found that the movement was no longer dangerous to the throne, he adopted a policy more in accordance with his personal character. Whether he had himself any religious belief whatever, may be doubted; certainly he had not a spark of religious fanaticism in his nature. Exclusively occupied with secular concerns, he took no interest in subtle questions of religious ceremonial, and was profoundly indifferent as to how his subjects prayed and crossed themselves, provided they obeyed his orders in worldly matters and paid their taxes regularly. As soon, therefore, as political considerations admitted of clemency, he stopped the persecutions, and at last, in 1714, issued ukazes to the effect that all Dissenters might live unmolested, provided they inscribed themselves in the official registers and paid a double poll-tax. Somewhat later they were allowed to practice freely all their old rites and customs, on condition of paying certain fines.

With the accession of Catharine II., "the friend of philosophers," the *Raskól*,* as the schism had come to be called, entered on a new phasis. Penetrated with the ideas of religious toleration then in fashion in Western Europe, Catherine abolished the disabilities to which the Raskólniks were subjected, and invited those of them who had fled across the frontier to return to their homes. Thousands accepted this invitation, and many who

* The term is derived from two Russian words—*ras*, asunder; and *kólod'*, to split.

had hitherto sought to conceal themselves from the eye of the Administration became rich and respected merchants. The peculiar, semi-monastic religious communities, which had, up till that time existed only in the forests of the northern and western provinces, began to appear in Moscow, and were officially recognized by the Administration. At first they took the form of hospitals for the sick, or asylums for the aged and infirm, but soon they became regular monasteries, the superiors of which exercised an undefined spiritual authority not only over the inmates, but also over the members of the sect throughout the length and breadth of the Empire.

From that time down to the present the Government has followed a wavering policy, oscillating between complete tolerance and active persecution. It must, however, be said that the persecution has never been of a very searching kind. In persecution, as in all other manifestations, the Russian Church directs its attention chiefly to external forms. It never seeks to ferret out heresy in a man's opinions, but complacently accepts as Orthodox all who annually appear at confession and communion, and who refrain from acts of open hostility. Those who can make these concessions to convenience are practically free from molestation, and those who cannot thus trifle with their conscience have an equally convenient method of escaping persecution. The parish clergy, with their customary indifference to things spiritual and their traditional habit of regarding their functions from the financial point of view, are hostile to sectarianism, chiefly because it diminishes their revenue by diminishing the number of parishioners requiring their ministrations. This cause of hostility can easily be removed by a certain pecuniary sacrifice on the part of the sectarians, and accordingly there generally exists between them and their parish priest a tacit contract, by which both parties are perfectly satisfied. The priest receives his income as if all his parishioners belonged to the State Church, and the parishioners are left in peace to believe and practice what they please. By this rude, convenient method, a very large amount of toleration is effectually secured. Whether the practice has a beneficial moral influence on the parish clergy is, of course, an entirely different question.

When the priest has been satisfied, there still remains the police, which likewise levies a tax on heterodoxy ; but the negotiations

are generally not difficult, for it is in the interest of both parties that they should come to terms and live in good-fellowship. Thus practically the Raskólniks live in the same condition as in the time of Peter: they pay a tax, and are not molested—only the money paid does not now find its way into the Imperial Exchequer.

These external changes in the history of the Raskól have exercised a powerful influence on its internal development.

When formally anathematized and excluded from the dominant Church, the Nonconformists had neither a definite organization nor a positive creed. The only tie that bound them together was hostility to the "Nikonian novelties," and all they desired was to preserve intact the beliefs and customs of their forefathers. At first they never thought of creating any permanent organization. The more moderate believed that the Tsar would soon re-establish Orthodoxy, and the more fanatical imagined that the end of all things was at hand.* In either case they had only to suffer for a little season, keeping themselves free from the taint of heresy and from all contact with the kingdom of Antichrist.

But years passed, and neither of these expectations was fulfilled. The fanatics awaited in vain the sound of the last trump and the appearance of Christ, coming with His angels to judge the world. The sun continued to rise, and the seasons followed each other in their accustomed courses, but the end was not yet. Nor did the civil power return to the old faith. Nikon fell a victim to Court intrigues and his own overweening pride, and was formally deposed. Tsar Alexis in the fullness of time was gathered unto his fathers. But there was no sign of a re-establishment of the old Orthodoxy. Gradually the leading Raskólniks perceived that they must make preparations, not for the Day of Judgment, but for a terrestrial future—that they must create some permanent form of ecclesiastical organization. In this work they encountered at the very outset not only practical but also theoretical difficulties.

So long as they confined themselves to simply resisting the official innovations, they seemed to be unanimous; but when they were forced to abandon this negative policy and to determine theoretically their new position, radical differences of opinion became

* Some had coffins made, and lay down in them at night, in the expectation that the Second Advent might take place before the morning.

apparent. All were convinced that the Russian Church had become heretical, and that it had now Antichrist instead of Christ as its head ; but it was not easy to determine what should be done by those who refused to bow the knee to the Son of Destruction. According to Protestant conceptions, there was a very simple solution of the difficulty : the Nonconformists had simply to create a new Church for themselves, and worship God in the way that seemed good to them. But to the Russians of that time such notions were still more repulsive than the innovations of Nikon. These men were Orthodox to the back-bone—"plus royalistes que le roi"—and according to Orthodox conceptions the founding of a new Church is an absurdity. They believed that if the chain of historic continuity were once broken, the Church must necessarily cease to exist, in the same way as an ancient family becomes extinct when its sole representative dies without issue. If, therefore, the Church had already ceased to exist, there was no longer any means of communication between Christ and His people, the sacraments were no longer efficacious, and mankind was forever deprived of the ordinary means of grace.

Now on this important point there was a difference of opinion among the Dissenters. Some of them believed that, though the ecclesiastical authorities had become heretical, the Church still existed in the communion of those who had refused to accept the innovations. Others declared boldly that the Orthodox Church had ceased to exist, that the ancient means of grace had been withdrawn, and that those who had remained faithful must thenceforth seek salvation, not in the sacraments, but in prayer, and such other religious exercises as did not require the co-operation of duly consecrated priests. Thus took place a schism among the Schismatics. The one party retained all the sacraments and ceremonial observances in the older form ; the other refrained from the sacraments and from many of the ordinary rites, on the ground that there was no longer a real priesthood, and that consequently the sacraments could not be efficacious. The former party are termed *Stáro-obriádtsi*, or Old Ritualists ; the latter are called *Bezpopóftsi*, that is to say, people "without priests" (*bez popóft*).

The succeeding history of these two sections of the Nonconformists has been widely different. The Old Ritualists, being simply ecclesiastical Conservatives desirous of resisting all innovations, have remained a compact body little troubled by differences of opinion.

The Priestless People, on the contrary, ever seeking to discover some new effectual means of salvation, have fallen into an endless number of independent sects.

The Old Ritualists had, however one theoretical difficulty, which has only been very recently removed. At first they had amongst themselves plenty of consecrated priests for the celebration of the ordinances, but they had no means of renewing the supply. They had no bishops, and according to Orthodox belief the lower degrees of the clergy cannot be created without episcopal consecration. At the time of the schism one bishop had thrown in his lot with the Schismatics, but he had died shortly afterward without leaving a successor, and thereafter no bishop had joined their ranks. As time wore on, the necessity of episcopal consecration came to be more and more felt, and it is not a little interesting to observe how these rigorists, who held to the letter of the law and declared themselves ready to die for a jot or a tittle, modified their theory in accordance with the changing exigencies of their position. When the priests who had kept themselves "pure and undefiled"—free from all contact with Antichrist—became scarce, it was discovered that certain priests of the dominant Church might be accepted if they formally abjured the Nikonian novelties. At first, however, only those who had been *consecrated* previous to the supposed apostasy of the Church were accepted, for the very good reason that consecration by bishops who had become heretical could not be efficacious. When these could no longer be obtained it was discovered that those who had been *baptized* previous to the apostasy might be accepted; and when even these could no longer be found, a still further concession was made to necessity, and *all* consecrated priests were received on condition of their solemnly abjuring their errors. Of such priests there was always an abundant supply. If a regular priest could not find a parish, or if he was deposed by the authorities for some crime or misdemeanor, he had merely to pass over to the Old Ritualists, and was sure to find among them a hearty welcome and a tolerable salary.

By these concessions the indefinite prolongation of Old Ritualism was secured, but many of the Old Ritualists could not but feel that their position was, to say the least, extremely anomalous. They had no bishops, of their own, and their priests were all consecrated by bishops whom they believed to be heretical! For

many years they hoped to escape from this dilemma by discovering "Orthodox"—that is to say, Old Ritualist—bishops somewhere in the East ; but when the East had been searched in vain, and all their efforts to obtain native bishops proved fruitless, they conceived the design of creating a bishopric somewhere beyond the frontier, among the Old Ritualists who had in times of persecution fled to Prussia, Austria, and Turkey. There were, however, immense difficulties in the way. In the first place it was necessary to obtain the formal permission of some foreign Government ; and in the second place an Orthodox bishop must be found, willing to consecrate an Old Ritualist or to become an old Ritualist himself. Again and again the attempt was made and failed ; but at last, after years of effort and intrigue, the design was realized. In 1844 the Austrian Government gave permission to found a bishopric at Bělava Krinitsa, in Gallicia, a few miles from the Russian frontier ; and two years later the deposed Metropolitan of Bosnia consented, after much hesitation, to pass over to the Old Ritualist confession and accept the diocese.* From that time the Old Ritualists have had their own bishops, and have not been obliged to accept the runaway priests of the dominant Church.

The Old Ritualists were naturally much grieved by the schism, and often sorely tried by persecution, but they have always enjoyed a certain spiritual tranquility, proceeding from the conviction that they have preserved for themselves the means of salvation. The position of the more extreme section of the Schismatics was much more tragical. They believed that the sacraments had irretrievably lost their efficacy, and that the ordinary means of salvation were forever withdrawn. They imagined that the powers of darkness had been let loose, that the authorities were the agents of Satan, and that the personage who filled the place of the old God-fearing Tsars was no other than Antichrist. Under the influence of these horrible ideas they fled to the woods and the caves to escape from the rage of the Beast, and to await the second coming of the Lord.

This state of things could not continue very long. Extreme religious fanaticism, like all other abnormal states, cannot long

* An interesting account of these negotiations, and a most curious picture of the Orthodox ecclesiastical world in Constantinople, is given by Subbótin. "*Istoria Bělokrinitskoj Ierarkhii*," Moscow, 1874.

exist in a mass of human beings without some constant exciting cause. The vulgar necessities of everyday life, especially among people who have to live by the labor of their hands, have a wonderfully sobering influence on the excited brain, and must always, sooner or later, prove fatal to inordinate excitement. A few peculiarly constituted individuals may show themselves capable of a lifelong enthusiasm, but the multitude is ever spasmodic in its fervor, and begins to slide back to its former apathy as soon as the exciting cause ceases to act. All this we find exemplified in the history of the "Priestless People." When it was found that the world did not come to an end, and that the rigorous system of persecution was relaxed, the less excitable natures returned to their homes, and resumed their old mode of life; and when Peter the Great made his politic concessions, many who had declared him to be Antichrist came to suspect that he was really not so black as he was painted. This idea struck deep root in a religious community near Lake Onega (Vuïgovski Skit), which had received special privileges on condition of supplying laborers for the neighboring mines; and here was developed a new theory which opened up a way of reconciliation with the Government. By a more attentive study of Holy Writ and ancient books it was discovered that the reign of Antichrist would consist of two periods. In the former, the Son of Destruction would reign merely in the spiritual sense, and the Faithful would not be much molested; in the latter, he would reign visibly in the flesh, and true believers would be subjected to the most frightful persecution. The second period, it was held, had evidently not yet arrived, for the Faithful now enjoyed "a time of freedom, and not of compulsion or oppression." Whether this theory is strictly in accordance with Apocalyptic prophecy and Patristic theology may be doubted, but it fully satisfies those who had already arrived at the conclusion by a different road, and who sought merely a means of justifying their position. Certain it is that very many accepted it, and determined to render unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, or, in secular language, to pray for the Tsar and to pay their taxes.

This ingenious compromise was not accepted by all the Priestless People. On the contrary, many of them regarded it as a woful backsliding—a new device of the Evil One; and among these irreconcilables was a certain peasant called Theodosi, a man of little education, but of remarkable intellectual power and un-

usual strength of character. He raised anew the old fanaticism by his preaching and writings—widely circulated in manuscript—and succeeded in founding a new sect in the forest region near the Polish frontier.

The Priestless Nonconformists thus fell into two sections; the one, called Pomórtsi,* accepted at least a partial reconciliation with the civil power; the other, called Theodosians, after their founder, held to the old opinions, and refused to regard the Tsar otherwise than as Antichrist.

These latter were at first very wild in their fanaticism, but ere long they gave way to the influences which had softened the fanaticism of the Pomórtsi. Under the liberal, conciliatory rule of Catherine they lived in contentment, and many of them enriched themselves by trade. Their fanatical zeal and exclusiveness evaporated under the influence of material well-being and constant contact with other classes, especially after they were allowed to build a monastery in Moscow. The Superior of this monastery, a man of much shrewdness and enormous wealth, succeeded in gaining the favor not only of the lower officials, who could be easily bought, but even of high-placed dignitaries, and for many years he exercised a very real, if undefined, authority over all sections of the Priestless People. "His fame," it is said, "sounded throughout Moscow, and the echoes were heard in Petropol (St. Petersburg), Riga, Astrakhan, Nizhni-Nóvgorod, and other lands of piety;" and when deputies came to consult him, they prostrated themselves in his presence, as before the great ones of the earth. Living thus not only in peace and plenty, but even in honor and luxury, "the proud Patriarch of the Theodosian Church" could not consistently fulminate against "the ravenous wolves," with whom he lived on friendly terms, or excite the fanaticism of his followers by highly-colored descriptions of "the awful sufferings and persecution of God's people in these latter days," as the founder of the sect had been wont to do. Though he could not openly abandon any fundamental doctrines, he allowed the ideas about the reign of Antichrist to fall into the background, and taught by example, if not by precept, that the

* The word Pomórtsi means "those who live near the sea-shore." It is commonly applied to the inhabitants of the Northern provinces—that is, those who live near the White Sea.

Faithful might, by prudent concessions, live very comfortably in this present evil world. This seed fell upon soil already prepared for its reception. The Faithful gradually forgot their old savage fanaticism, and have since contrived, while holding many of their old ideas in theory, to accommodate themselves in practice to the existing order of things.

The gradual softening and toning down of the original fanaticism in these two sects are strikingly exemplified in their ideas of marriage, which underwent, like their conceptions of Antichrist, profound modifications. According to Orthodox doctrine, marriage is a sacrament which can only be performed by a consecrated priest, and consequently for the Priestless People the celebration of marriage was an impossibility. In the first ages of Sectarianism celibacy was quite in accordance with their surroundings. Living in constant fear of their persecutors, and wandering from one place of refuge to another, the sufferers for the faith had little time or inclination to think of family ties, and readily listened to the monks, who exhorted them to mortify the lusts of the flesh. If we remember that the Russian people, even under ordinary circumstances, regard celibacy as an essential attribute of the higher Christian life, we may easily imagine their sentiments regarding marriage in a time of persecution, when the second coming of the Lord was daily and hourly expected. Even after the religious panic had subsided, all the Priestless communities continued to hold that marriage was merely sinful concubinage, and that celibacy was incumbent on all true believers. The result, however, proved that celibacy in the creed by no means insures chastity in life. Not only in the villages of the Dissenters, but even in those religious communities which professed a more ascetic mode of life, a numerous class of "orphans" began to appear, who knew not who their parents were; and this ignorance of blood-relationship naturally led to incestuous connections. Besides this, the doctrine of celibacy had grave practical inconveniences, for the peasant requires a housewife to attend to domestic concerns and to help him in his agricultural occupations. Thus the necessity of re-establishing family life came to be felt, and the feeling soon found expression in a doctrinal form both among the Pomórtsi and among the Theodosians. Learned dissertations were written, and disseminated in manuscript copies, violent discussions took place, and at last a great

Council was held in Moscow to discuss the question.* The point at issue was never unanimously decided, but many accepted the ingenious arguments in favor of matrimony, and contracted marriages which were, of course, null and void in the eye of the law and of the Church, but perfectly valid in all other respects. Had the Government fostered this movement by giving a legal validity to these marriages, it would have closed one of the chief fountains of sectarian fanaticism; unfortunately, it long listened to the suggestions of the ecclesiastics, who could admit of no compromise in sacramental matters, and it is only within the last few years that important concessions on this point have been made.

This new backsliding of the unstable multitude produced a new outburst of fanaticism among the stubborn few. Some of those who had hitherto sought to conceal the origin of the "orphan" class above referred to now boldly asserted that the existence of this class was a religious necessity, because in order to be saved men must repent, and in order to repent men must sin! At the same time the old ideas about Antichrist were revived and preached with fervor by a peasant called Philip, who founded a new sect called the Philipists. This sect still exists. They hold fast to the old belief that the Tsar is Antichrist, and that the civil and ecclesiastical authorities are the servants of Satan—an idea that was kept alive by the corruption and extortion for which the Administration were, until very recently, notorious. They do not venture on open resistance to the authorities, but the bolder members take little pains to conceal their opinions and sentiments, and may be easily recognized by their severe aspect, their Puritanical manner, and their Pharisaical horror of everything which they suppose heretical and unclean. Some of them, it is said, carry this fastidiousness to such an extent that they take off and throw away the handle of a door if it has been touched by a heretic!

It may seem that we have here reached the extreme limits of fanaticism, but in reality there were men whom even the Pharisaical Puritanism of the Philipists did not satisfy. These new

* I cannot here enter into the details of this remarkable controversy, but I may say that in studying it I have been frequently astonished by the dialectical power and logical subtlety displayed by the disputants. Some of the treatises, written by simple peasants, might bear comparison with the ingenious dissertations of the mediæval Schoolmen.

zealots, who appeared in the time of Catherine II. but first became known to the official world in the reign of Nicholas, rebuked the lukewarmness of their brethren, and founded a new sect in order to preserve intact the ascetism practiced immediately after the schism. The sect still exists. They call themselves "Christ's People" (Christóviye Lyúdi), but are better known under the popular names of "Wanderers" (Stránniki), or "Fugitives" (Beguny). Of all the sects they are the most hostile to the existing political and social organization. Not content with condemning the military conscription, the payment of taxes, the acceptance of passports, and everything connected with the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, they consider it sinful to live peaceably among an Orthodox—that is, according to their belief, a heretical—population, and to have dealings with any who do not share their extreme views. Holding the Antichrist doctrine in its extreme form, they declare that Tsars are the vessels of Satan, that the Established Church is the dwelling-place of the Father of Lies, and that all who submit to the authorities are children of the Devil. According to this creed, those who wish to escape from the wrath to come must have neither houses nor fixed places of abode, must sever all ties that bind them to the world, and must wander about continually from place to place. True Christians are but strangers and pilgrims in the present life, and whoso binds himself to the world will perish with the world.

Such is the theory of these Wanderers, but among them, as among the less fanatical sects, practical necessities have produced concessions and compromises. As it is impossible to lead a nomadic life in Russian forests, the Wanderers have been compelled to admit into their ranks what may be called lay-brethren—men who nominally belong to the sect, but who live like ordinary mortals and have some rational way of gaining a livelihood. These latter live in the villages or towns, support themselves by agriculture or trade, accept passports from the authorities, pay their taxes regularly, and conduct themselves in all outward respects like loyal subjects. Their chief religious duty consists in giving food and shelter to their more zealous brethren, who have adopted a vagabond life in practice as well as in theory. It is only when they feel death approaching that they consider it necessary to separate themselves from the heretical world, and they effect this by having themselves carried out to some neigh-

boring wood—or into a garden if there is no wood at hand—where they may die in the open air.

Thus, we see, there is among the Russian Nonconformist sects what may be called a gradation of fanaticism, in which is reflected the history of the Great Schism of the seventeenth century. In the Wanderers we have the representatives of those who adopted and preserved the Antichrist doctrine in its extreme form—the successors of those who fled to the forests to escape from the rage of the Beast and to await the second coming of Christ. In the Philipists we have the representatives of those who adopted these ideas in a somewhat softer form, and who came to recognize the necessity of having some regular means of subsistence until the last trump should be heard. The Theodosians represent those who were in theory at one with the preceding category, but who, having less religious fanaticism, considered it necessary to yield to force and make peace with the Government without sacrificing their convictions. In the Pomortsy we see those who preserved only the religious ideas of the schism, and became reconciled with the civil power. Lastly we have the Old Ritualists, who differed from all the other sects in retaining the old ordinances, and who simply rejected the spiritual authority of the dominant Church. Besides these chief sections of the Nonconformists there are a great many minor denominations (*tólki*), differing from each other on minor points of doctrine. In certain districts, it is said, nearly every village has one or two independent sects. This is especially the case among the Don Cossacks and the Cossacks of the Ural, who are in great part descendants of the men who fled from the early persecutions.

Of all the sects the Old Ritualists stand nearest to the official Church. They hold the same dogmas, practice the same rites, and differ only in trifling ceremonial matters, which few people consider essential. In the hope of inducing them to return to the official fold the Government created at the beginning of the present century special churches, in which they were allowed to retain their ceremonial peculiarities on condition of accepting regularly-consecrated priests and submitting to ecclesiastical jurisdiction. As yet the design has not met with much success. The great majority of the Old Ritualists regard it as a trap, and assert that the Church in making this concession has been guilty of self-contradiction. “The Ecclesiastical Council of Moscow,” they

say, "anathematized our forefathers for holding to the old ritual, and declared that the whole course of nature would be changed sooner than the curse be withdrawn. The course of nature has not been changed, but the anathema has been cancelled." This argument ought to have a certain weight with those who believe in the infallibility of Ecclesiastical Councils.

Toward the Priestless People the Government has always acted in a much less conciliatory spirit. Its severity has been sometimes justified on the ground that Sectarianism has had a political as well as a religious significance. A State like Russia cannot overlook the existence of sects which preach the duty of systematic resistance to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities and hold doctrines which lead to the grossest immorality. This argument, it must be admitted, is not without a certain force, but it seems to me that the policy adopted tended to increase rather than diminish the evils which it sought to cure. Instead of dispelling the absurd idea that the Tsar was Antichrist by a system of strict and even-handed justice, punishing merely actual crimes and delinquencies, the Government confirmed the notion in the minds of thousands by persecuting those who had committed no crime and who desired merely to worship God according to their conscience. Above all it erred in preventing and punishing those marriages which, though legally irregular, were the best possible means of diminishing fanaticism, by leading back the fanatics to healthy social life. Fortunately these errors have now been abandoned. Since the accession of the present Emperor a policy of clemency and conciliation has been adopted, and has proved much more efficacious than the former system of persecution. The Dissenters have not returned to the official fold, but they have lost much of their old fanaticism and exclusiveness.

In respect of numbers the Sectarians compose a very formidable body. Of Old Ritualists and Priestless People there are, it is said, no less than seven millions; and the Protestant and Fantastical sects comprise probably about three millions more. If these numbers be correct, the Sectarians constitute about an eighth of the whole population of the Empire. They count in their ranks none of the nobles—none of the so-called enlightened class—but they include in their number the third and wealthiest part of the merchant class, the majority of the Don Cossacks, and all the Cossacks of the Ural.

Under these circumstances it is important to know how far the Sectarrians are politically disaffected. Some people imagine that in the event of an insurrection or a foreign invasion they might rise against the Government, whilst others believe that this supposed danger is purely imaginary. For my own part I agree with the latter opinion, which is strongly supported by the history of many important events, such as the French invasion in 1812, the Crimean War, and the last Polish insurrection. The great majority of the Schismatics and heretics are, I believe, loyal subjects of the Tsar. The more violent sects, which are alone capable of active hostility against the authorities, are weak in numbers, and regard all outsiders with such profound mistrust, that they are wholly impervious to inflammatory influences from without. Even if all the sects were capable of active hostility, they would not be nearly so formidable as their numbers seem to indicate, for they are hostile to each other, and are wholly incapable of combining for a common purpose.

Though Sectarianism is thus by no means a serious political danger, it has nevertheless a considerable political significance. It proves satisfactorily that the Russian people is by no means so docile and pliable as is commonly supposed, and that it is capable of showing a stubborn, passive resistance to authority when it believes great interests to be at stake. The dogged energy which it has displayed in asserting for centuries its religious liberty may perhaps some day be employed in the arena of secular politics.*

* Regarding the Raskól some able articles have been published recently by Mr. Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, in the "*Revue des Deux Mondes*." English readers who desire to know more on the subject should consult the Appendix to "*Select Sermons by Philaret, late Metropolitan of Moscow*," London, Masters, 1870. This latter work, published anonymously, is from the pen of a very distinguished Russian lady, and may be recommended to all who take an interest in the Russian Church. The spirit of "ceremonialism" which produced the Raskól, and unfortunately still exists, has been well described and boldly denounced by Mr. Beliústin—himself a parish priest, but less enamored of routine and more courageous than his fellows.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PASTORAL TRIBES OF THE STEPPE.

Reasons for undertaking this Journey—Appearance of the Villages—Characteristic Incident—Peasant Mendacity—Explanation of the Phenomenon—I awake in Asia—Bashkir Aoul—*Dîner à la Tartare*—Koomuiss—A Bashkir Troubadour—Honest Mehemet Zián—Actual Economic Condition of the Bashkir throws Light on a well-known Philosophical Theory—Why a Pastoral Race adopts Agriculture—The Genuine Steppe—The Kirghis—Letter from Genghis Khan—The Kalmuks—Nogai Tartars—Struggle between Nomadic Hordes and Agricultural Colonists

AFTER living some time with the Molokáni in the southern part of the province of Samara, I struck eastward with the intention of visiting the Bashkirs, a Tartar tribe which still preserved—so at least I was assured—its old nomadic habits. My reasons for undertaking this journey were twofold. In the first place I was desirous of seeing with my own eyes some remnants of those terrible nomadic tribes which had at one time conquered Russia and long threatened to over-run Europe—those Tartar hordes which gained, by their irresistible force and relentless cruelty, the reputation of being “the scourge of God.” Besides this, I had long wished to study the conditions of pastoral life, and congratulated myself on having found a convenient opportunity of doing so.

As I proceeded eastwards I noticed a change in the appearance of the villages. The ordinary wooden houses, with their high sloping roofs, gradually gave place to flat-roofed huts, built of a peculiar kind of unburnt bricks, composed of mud and straw. I noticed, too, that the population became less and less dense, and the amount of fallow-land proportionately greater. The peasants were evidently richer than those near the Volga, but they complained—as the Russian peasant always does—that they had not land enough. In answer to my inquiries why they did not use

the thousands of acres that were lying fallow around them, they explained that they had already raised crops on that land for several successive years, and that consequently they must now allow it to "rest."

In one of the villages through which I passed I met with a very characteristic little incident. The village was called Samovólnaya Ivánofka, that is to say, "Ivánofka the Self-willed" or "the Non-authorized." Whilst our horses were being changed my traveling companion, in the course of conversation with a group of peasants, inquired about the origin of this extraordinary name, and discovered a curious bit of local history. The founders of the village had settled on the land without the permission of the owner, and obstinately resisted all attempts at eviction. Again and again troops had been sent to drive them away, but as soon as the troops retired these "self-willed" people returned and resumed possession, till at last the proprietor, who lived in St. Petersburg or some other distant place, became weary of the contest and allowed them to remain. The various incidents were related with much circumstantial detail, so that the narration lasted perhaps half an hour. All this time I listened attentively, and when the story was finished I took out my note-book in order to jot down the facts, and asked in what year the affair had happened. No answer was given to my question. The peasants merely looked at each other in a significant way and kept silence. Thinking that my question had not been understood, I asked it a second time, repeating a part of what had been related. To my astonishment and utter discomfiture they all declared that they had never related anything of the sort! In despair I appealed to my friend and asked him whether my ears had deceived me—whether I was laboring under some strange hallucination. Without giving me any reply he simply smiled and turned away.

When we had left the village and were driving along in our tarantass the mystery was satisfactorily cleared up. My friend explained to me that I had not at all misunderstood what had been related, but that my abrupt question and the sight of my note-book had suddenly aroused the peasants' suspicions, and cut short their communicativeness. "They evidently suspected," he continued, "that you were a *Tchinóvnik*, and that you wished to use to their detriment the knowledge you had acquired. They

thought it safer, therefore, at once to deny it all. You don't yet understand the Russian *muzhik*!"

In this last remark I was obliged to concur, but since that time I have come to know the *muzhik* better, and an incident of the kind would now no longer surprise me. From a long series of observations I have come to the conclusion that the great majority of the Russian peasants, when dealing with the authorities, consider the most patent and barefaced falsehoods as a fair means of self-defense. Thus, for example, when a *Muzhik* is implicated in a criminal affair, and a preliminary investigation is being made, he probably begins by constructing an elaborate story to explain the facts and exculpate himself. The story may be a tissue of self-evident falsehoods from beginning to end, but he defends it valiantly as long as possible. When he perceives that the position which he has taken up is utterly untenable, he declares openly that all he has said is false, and that he wishes to make a new declaration. This second declaration may have the same fate as the former one, and then he proposes a third. Thus groping his way, he tries various stories till he finds one that seems proof against all objections. In the fact of his thus telling lies there is of course nothing remarkable, for criminals in all parts of the world have a tendency to deviate from the truth when they fall into the hands of justice. The peculiarity is that he retracts his statements with the composed air of a chess-player who requests his opponent to let him take back an inadvertent move. Under the old system of procedure, which was abolished about ten years ago, clever criminals often contrived, by means of this simple device, to have their trial postponed for many years.

Such incidents naturally astonish a foreigner, and he is apt, in consequence, to pass a very severe judgment on the Russian peasantry in general. The reader may remember Karl Karl'itch's remarks on the subject. These remarks I have heard repeated in various forms by Germans in all parts of the country, and there must be a certain amount of truth in them, for even an eminent Slavophil once publicly admitted that the peasant is prone to perjury.* It is necessary, however, as it seems to me, to draw a distinction. In the ordinary intercourse of peasants among themselves, or with people in whom they have confidence, I do not

* Kiréyefski, in the *Rásskaya Beséda*.

believe that the habit of lying is abnormally developed. It is only when the peasant comes in contact with authorities that he shows himself an expert fabricator of falsehoods. In this there is nothing that need surprise us. For ages the peasantry were exposed to the arbitrary power and ruthless exactions of those who were placed over them ; and as the law gave them no means of legally protecting themselves, their only means of self-defense lay in cunning and deceit.

We have here, I believe, the true explanation of that "Oriental mendacity," about which Eastern travelers have written so much. It is simply the result of a lawless state of society. Suppose a truth-loving Englishman falls into the hands of brigands or savages. Will he not, if he have merely an ordinary moral character, consider himself justified in inventing a few falsehoods in order to effect his escape ? If so, we have no right to condemn very severely the hereditary mendacity of those races which have lived for many generations in a position analogous to that of the supposed Englishman among brigands. When legitimate interests cannot be protected by truthfulness and honesty, prudent people always learn to employ means which experience has proved to be more effectual. In a country where the law does not afford protection, the strong man defends himself by his strength, the weak by cunning and duplicity. This fully explains the fact—if fact it be—that in Turkey the Christians are less truthful than the Mahometans.

But we have wandered a long way from the road to Bashkiria. Let us therefore return at once.

Of all the journeys which I made in Russia this was one of the most agreeable. The weather was bright and warm, without being unpleasantly hot ; the roads were tolerably smooth ; the tarantass, which had been hired for the whole journey, was nearly as comfortable as a tarantass can be ; good milk, eggs, and white bread could be obtained in abundance ; there was not much difficulty in procuring horses in the villages through which we passed, and the owners of them were not very extortionate in their demands. But what most contributed to my comfort was that I was accompanied by an agreeable, intelligent young Russian, who kindly undertook to make all the necessary arrangements, and I was thereby freed from those annoyances and worries which are always encountered in primitive countries where traveling is not

yet a recognized institution. To him I left the entire control of our movements, passively acquiescing in everything, and asking no questions as to what was coming. Taking advantage of my passivity, he prepared for me one evening a pleasant little surprise.

About sunset we had left a village called Morsha, and shortly afterward, feeling drowsy, and being warned by my companion that we should have a long uninteresting drive, I had lain down in the tarantass and gone to sleep. On awaking I found that the tarantass had stopped, and that the stars were shining brightly overhead. A big dog was barking furiously close at hand, and I heard the voice of the Yemstchik informing us that we had arrived. I at once sat up and looked about me, expecting to see a village of some kind, but instead of that I perceived a wide open space, and at a short distance a group of haystacks. Close to the tarantass stood two figures in long cloaks, armed with big sticks, and speaking to each other in an unknown tongue. My first idea was that we had been somehow led into a trap, so I drew my revolver in order to be ready for all emergencies. My companion was still snoring loudly by my side, and stoutly resisted all my efforts to awake him.

“What’s this?” I said, in a gruff, angry voice, to the Yemstchik. “Where have you taken us to?”

“To where I was ordered, master!”

For the purpose of getting a more satisfactory explanation I took to shaking my sleepy companion, but before he had returned to consciousness the moon shone out brightly from behind a thick bank of clouds, and cleared up the mystery. The supposed haystacks turned out to be tents. The two figures with long sticks, whom I had suspected of being brigands, were peaceable shepherds, dressed in the ordinary Oriental khalât, and tending their sheep, which were grazing beside them. Instead of being in an empty hay-field, as I had imagined, we had before us a regular Tartar *Aoul*, such as I had often read about. For a moment I felt astonished and bewildered. It seemed to me that I had fallen asleep in Europe and awoke in Asia!

In a few minutes we were comfortably installed in one of the tents, a circular, cupola-shaped erection, of about twelve feet in diameter, composed of a framework of light wooden rods covered with thick felt. It contained no furniture, except a goodly quan-

tity of carpets and pillows, which had been formed into a bed for our accommodation. Our amiable host, who was evidently somewhat astonished at our unexpected visit but refrained from asking questions, soon bade us good-night and retired. We were not, however, left alone. A large number of black beetles remained and gave us a welcome in their own peculiar fashion. Whether they were provided with wings, or made up for the want of flying appliances by crawling up the sides of the tent and dropping down on any object they wished to reach, I did not discover, but certain it is that they somehow reached our heads—even when we were standing upright—and clung to our hair with wonderful tenacity. Why they should show such a marked preference for human hair we could not conjecture, till it occurred to us that the natives habitually shaved their heads, and that these beetles must naturally consider a hair-covered cranium a curious novelty deserving of careful examination. Like all children of nature they were decidedly indiscreet and troublesome in their curiosity, but when the light was extinguished they took the hint and departed.

When we awoke next morning it was broad daylight, and we found a crowd of natives in front of the tent. Our arrival was evidently regarded as an important event, and all the inhabitants of the aoul were anxious to make our acquaintance. First our host came forward. He was a short, slimly-built man, of middle age, with a grave, severe expression, indicating an unsociable disposition. We afterward learned that he was an Okhoon—that is to say, a minor officer of the Mahometan ecclesiastical administration, and at the same time a small trader in silken and woolen stuffs. With him came the Mullah, or priest, a portly old gentleman with an open honest face of the European type, and a fine gray beard. The other important members of the little community followed. They were all swarthy in color, and had the small eyes and prominent cheek-bones which are characteristic of the Tartar races, but they had little of that flatness of countenance and peculiar ugliness which distinguish the pure Mongol. All of them, with the exception of the Mullah, spoke a little Russian, and used it to assure us that we were welcome. The children remained respectfully in the background, and the women with veiled faces eyed us furtively from the doors of the tents.

The aoul consisted of about twenty tents, all constructed on the same model, and scattered about in sporadic fashion without the

least regard to symmetry. Close by was a water-course, which appears in some maps as a river, under the name of Karalyk, but which was at that time merely a succession of pools containing a dark-colored liquid. As we more than suspected that these pools supplied the inhabitants with water for culinary purposes, the sight was not calculated to whet our appetites. We turned away therefore hurriedly, and for want of something better to do we watched the preparations for dinner. These were decidedly primitive. A sheep was brought near the door of our tent, and there killed, skinned, cut up into pieces, and put into an immense pot, under which a fire had been kindled.

The dinner itself was not less primitive than the method of preparing it. The table consisted of a large napkin spread in the middle of the tent, and the chairs were represented by cushions, on which we sat cross-legged. There were no plates, knives, forks, spoons, or chop-sticks. Guests were expected all to eat out of a common wooden bowl, and to use the instruments with which Nature had provided them. The service was performed by the host and his son. The fare was copious, but not varied—consisting entirely of boiled mutton, without bread or other substitute, and a little salted horse-flesh thrown in as an *entrée*.

To eat out of the same dish with half a dozen Mahometans, who accept their Prophet's injunction about ablutions in a highly figurative sense, and who are totally unacquainted with the use of forks and spoons, is not an agreeable operation, even if one is not much troubled with religious prejudices; but with these Bashkirs, something worse than this has to be encountered, for their favorite method of expressing their esteem and affection for one with whom they are eating consists in putting bits of mutton, and sometimes even handfuls of hashed meat, into his mouth! When I discovered this unexpected peculiarity in Bashkir manners and customs, I almost regretted that I had made a favorable impression upon my new acquaintances.

When the sheep had been devoured, partly by the company in the tent and partly by a nondescript company outside—for the whole aoul took part in the festivities—koomuiss was served in unlimited quantities. This beverage, as I have already explained, is mare's milk fermented; but what here passed under the name was very different from the koomuiss I had tasted in the *établissements* of Samára. There it was a pleasant, effervescing drink,

with only the slightest tinge of acidity; here it was a "still" liquid, strongly resembling very thin and very sour buttermilk. My Russian friend made a very wry face on first tasting it, and I felt inclined at first to do likewise, but noticing that his grimaces made an unfavorable impression on the audience, I restrained my facial muscles, and looked as if I liked it. Very soon I really came to like it, and learned to "drink fair" with those who had been accustomed to it from their childhood. By this feat I rose considerably in the estimation of the natives; for if one does not drink koomuiss, one cannot be sociable in the Bashkir sense of the term, and by acquiring the habit one adopts an essential principle of Bashkir nationality. I should certainly have preferred having a cup of it to myself, but I thought it well to conform to the habits of the country, and to accept the big wooden bowl when it was passed round. In return my friends made an important concession in my favor: they allowed me to smoke as I pleased, though they considered that, as the Prophet had refrained from tobacco, ordinary mortals should do the same.

Whilst the "loving-cup" was going round I distributed some small presents which I had brought for the purpose, and then proceeded to explain the object of my visit. In the distant country from which I came—far away to the westward—I had heard of the Bashkirs as a people possessing many strange customs, but very kind and hospitable to strangers. Of their kindness and hospitality I had already learned something by experience, and I hoped they would allow me to learn something of their mode of life, their customs, their songs, their history, and their religion, in all of which I assured them my distant countrymen took a lively interest.

This little after-dinner speech was perhaps not quite in accordance with Bashkir etiquette, but it apparently made a favorable impression. There was a decided murmur of approbation, and those who understood Russian translated my words to their less accomplished brethren. A short consultation ensued, and then there was a general shout of "Abdullah! Abdullah!" which was taken up and repeated by those standing outside.

In a few minutes Abdullah appeared, with a big, half-picked bone in his hand, and the lower part of his face besmeared with grease. He was a short, thin man, with a dark, sallow complexion, and a look of premature old age; but the suppressed

smile that played about his mouth and a tremulous movement of his right eye-lid showed plainly that he had not yet forgotten the fun and frolic of youth. His dress was of richer and more gaudy material, but at the same time more tawdry and tattered, than that of the others. Altogether he looked like an *artiste* in distressed circumstances, and such he really was. At a word and a sign from the host he laid aside his bone and drew from under his green silk khalát a small wind-instrument resembling a flute or flageolet. On this he played a number of native airs. The first melodies which he played reminded me strongly of a Highland pibroch—at one moment low, solemn, and plaintive, then gradually rising into a soul-stirring, martial strain, and again descending to a plaintive wail. The amount of expression which he put into his simple instrument was truly marvelous. Then passing suddenly from grave to gay, he played a series of light, merry airs, and some of the younger on-lookers got up and performed a dance as boisterous and ungraceful as an Irish jig.

This Abdullah turned out to be for me a most valuable acquaintance. He was a kind of Bashkir troubadour, well acquainted not only with the music, but also with the traditions, the history, the superstitions, and the folk-lore of his people. By the Okhoon and the Mullah he was regarded as a frivolous, worthless fellow, who had no regular, respectable means of gaining a livelihood, but among the men of less severe principles he was a general favorite. As he spoke Russian fluently I could converse with him freely without the aid of an interpreter, and he willingly placed all his store of knowledge at my disposal. When in the company of the Okhoon he was always solemn and taciturn, but as soon as he was relieved of that dignitary's presence he became lively and communicative.

Another of my new acquaintances was equally useful to me in another way. This was Mehemet Zián, who was not so intelligent as Abdullah, but much more sympathetic. In his open, honest face, and kindly, unaffected manner, there was something so irresistibly attractive that, before I had known him twenty-four hours, a sort of friendship had sprung up between us. He was a tall, muscular, broad-shouldered man, with features that indicated a mixture of European blood. Though already past middle age, he was still wiry and active—so active that he could, when on horseback, pick a stone off the ground without dismounting. He

could, however, no longer perform this feat at full gallop, as he had been wont to do in his youth. His geographical knowledge was extremely limited and inaccurate—his mind being in this respect like those old Russian maps, in which the nations of the earth and a good many peoples who had never more than a mythical existence are jumbled together in hopeless confusion—but his geographical curiosity was insatiable. My traveling map—the first thing of the kind he had ever seen—interested him deeply. When he found that by simply examining it I could tell him the direction and distance of several places he knew, his face was like that of a child who sees for the first time a conjuror's performance; and when I explained the trick to him, and taught him to calculate the distance to Bokhara—the sacred city of the Mussulmans of that region—his delight was unbounded. I could not make him a present of my map, as I should have wished, for I had no other with me, but I promised to find ways and means of sending him one; and I kept my word by means of a native of the Karalyk district whom I discovered in Samára. Two or three years later I was informed by a Russian traveler, who had spent a night in the aoul, that he had seen there a map called “the Englishman's gift,” and that he had been taught how to calculate the distance to Bokhara by a worthy Bashkir, called Mehemet Zián.

If Mehemet knew little of foreign countries he was thoroughly well acquainted with his own, and repaid me most liberally for my elementary lessons in geography. With him I visited the neighboring aouls. In all of them he had numerous acquaintances, and everywhere we were received with the greatest hospitality. I sought to avoid, not always successfully, festivities such as the one I have just described, partly because I knew that my hosts were generally poor and would not accept payment for the slaughtered sheep, and partly because I had reason to apprehend that they would express to me their esteem and affection *more Bashkirico*; but in koomuiss drinking, the ordinary occupation of these people when they have nothing to do, I had to indulge to a most inordinate extent. On these expeditions Abdullah generally accompanied us, and rendered valuable service as interpreter and troubadour. Mehemet could express himself in Russian, but his vocabulary failed him as soon as the conversation ran above very ordinary topics; Abdullah, on the contrary, was a first-rate interpreter, and under the influence of his musical pipe and lively

talkativeness new acquaintances became sociable and communicative. Poor Abdullah ! He was a kind of universal genius, but his faded, tattered khalát showed only too plainly that in Bashkiria, as in more civilized countries, universal genius and the artistic temperament lead to poverty rather than wealth.

I have no intention of troubling the reader with the miscellaneous facts which, with the assistance of these two friends, I succeeded in collecting—indeed, I could not if I would, for the notes I then made were afterward lost—but I wish to say a few words about the actual economic condition of the Bashkirs. They are at present passing from pastoral to agricultural life ; and it is not a little interesting to note the causes which induce them to make this change, and the way in which it is made.

Philosophers have long held a theory of social development, according to which men were at first hunters, then shepherds, and lastly agriculturists. How far this theory is in accordance with reality we need not for the present inquire, but we may examine an important part of it and ask ourselves the question, Why did pastoral tribes adopt agriculture ? The common explanation is that they changed their mode of life in consequence of some ill-defined, fortuitous circumstances. A great legislator rose amongst them and taught them to till the soil, or they came in contact with an agricultural race and adopted the customs of their neighbors. Such explanations may content those theorists who habitually draw their facts from their own internal consciousness, but they must appear eminently unsatisfactory to any one who has lived with a pastoral people. Pastoral life is so incomparably more agreeable than the hard lot of the agriculturist, and so much more in accordance with the natural indolence of human nature, that no great legislator, though he had the wisdom of Solon and the eloquence of Demosthenes, could possibly induce his fellow-countrymen to pass voluntarily from the one to the other. Of all the ordinary means of gaining a livelihood—with the exception perhaps of mining—agriculture is the most laborious, and is never voluntarily adopted by men who have not been accustomed to it from their childhood. The life of a pastoral race, on the contrary, is an almost unbroken holiday, and I can imagine nothing except the prospect of starvation which could induce men who live by their flocks and herds to make the transition to agricultural life.

The prospect of starvation is, in fact, the cause of the transition

—probably in all cases, and certainly in the case of the Bashkirs. So long as they had abundance of pasturage they never thought of tilling the soil. Their flocks and herds supplied them with all that they required, and enabled them to lead a tranquil, indolent existence. No great legislator arose among them to teach them the use of the plow and the sickle, and when they saw the Russian peasants on their borders laboriously plowing and reaping, they probably looked on them with compassion, and certainly never thought of following their example. But an impersonal legislator came to them—a very severe and tyrannical legislator, who would not brook disobedience—I mean Economic Necessity. By the encroachments of the Ural Cossacks on the east, and by the ever-advancing wave of Russian colonization from the north and west, their territory had been greatly diminished. With diminution of the pasturage came diminution of the live stock, their sole means of subsistence. In spite of their passively conservative spirit they had to look about for some new means of obtaining food and clothing—some new mode of life requiring less extensive territorial possessions. It was only then that they began to think of imitating their neighbors. They saw that the neighboring Russian peasant lived comfortably on thirty or forty acres of land, whilst they possessed a hundred and fifty acres per male, and were in danger of starvation. The conclusion to be drawn from this was self-evident—they ought at once to begin plowing and sowing. But there was a very serious obstacle to the putting of this principle in practice. Agriculture certainly requires less land than sheep-farming, but it requires very much more labor, and to hard work the Bashkirs were not accustomed. They could bear hardships and fatigues in the shape of long journeys on horseback, but the severe, monotonous labor of the plow and the sickle was not to their taste. At first, therefore, they adopted a compromise. They had a portion of their land tilled by Russian peasants, and ceded to these a part of the produce in return for the labor expended; in other words, they assumed the position of landed proprietors, and farmed part of their land on the *métayage* system.

The process of transition had reached this point in several aouls which I visited. My friend Mehemet Zián showed me at some distance from the tents his plot of arable land, and introduced me to the peasant who tilled it—a Little-Russian, who assured me that the arrangement satisfied all parties. The process of transition

cannot, however, stop here. The compromise is merely a temporary expedient. The cultivation of virgin soil gives very abundant harvests, sufficient to support both the laborer and the indolent proprietor, but this virgin fertility soon becomes exhausted, and after a few years the soil gives only a very moderate revenue. The proprietors, therefore, must sooner or later dispense with the laborers, who take half of the produce as their recompense, and must themselves put their hand to the plow.

Thus we see the Bashkirs are, properly speaking, no longer a pastoral, nomadic people. The discovery of this fact caused me some little disappointment, and in the hope of finding a tribe in a more primitive condition I visited the Kirghis of the Inner Horde, who occupy the country to the southward, in the direction of the Caspian. Here for the first time I saw the genuine Steppe in the full sense of the term—a country level as the sea, with not a hillock or even a gentle undulation to break the straight line of the horizon, and not a patch of cultivation, a tree, a bush, or even a stone, to diversify the monotonous expanse. Traversing such a region is, I need scarcely say, very weary work—all the more as there are no milestones or other landmarks to show you the progress you are making. Still it is not so overwhelmingly wearisome as might be supposed. In the morning you may watch the vast lakes, with their rugged promontories and well-wooded banks, which the mirage creates for your amusement. Then during the course of the day there are always one or two trifling incidents which arouse you for a little from your somnolence. Now you descry a couple of horsemen on the distant horizon, and watch them as they approach; and when they come alongside you may have a talk with them if you know the language or have an interpreter; or you may amuse yourself with a little pantomime, if articulate speech is impossible. Now you encounter a long train of camels marching along with solemn, stately step, and speculate as to the contents of the big packages with which they are laden. Now you encounter the carcass of a horse that has fallen by the way-side, and watch the dogs and the steppe eagles fighting over their prey; and if you are murderously inclined you may take a shot at these great birds, for they are ignorantly brave, and will sometimes allow you to approach within thirty or forty yards. Now you perceive—most pleasant sight of all—a group of haystack-shaped tents in the distance; and you hurry on to enjoy the grateful

shade, and quench your thirst with "deep, deep draughts" of refreshing koomuiss.

During my journey through the Kirghis country I was accompanied by a Russian gentleman, who had provided himself with a circular letter from the hereditary chieftain of the Horde, a personage who rejoiced in the imposing name of Genghis Khan,* and claimed to be a descendant of the great Mongol conqueror. This document assured us a good reception in the aouls through which we passed. Every Kirghis who saw it treated it with profound respect, and professed to put all his goods and chattels at our service. But in spite of this powerful recommendation we met with none of that friendly cordiality and communicativeness which I had found among the Bashkirs. A tent with an unlimited quantity of cushions was always set apart for our accommodation; the sheep was killed and boiled for our dinner, and the pails of koomuiss were regularly brought for our refreshment; but all this was evidently done as a matter of duty and not as a spontaneous expression of hospitality. When we determined once or twice to prolong our visit beyond the term originally announced, I could perceive that our host was not at all delighted by the change of our plans. The only consolation we had was, that those who entertained us made no scruples about accepting payment for the food and shelter supplied.

From all this I have no intention of drawing the conclusion that the Kirghis are, as a people, inhospitable or unfriendly to strangers. My experience of them is too limited to warrant any such inference. The letter of Genghis Khan insured us all the accommodation we required, but it at the same time gave us a certain official character not at all favorable to the establishment of friendly relations. Those with whom we came in contact regarded us as Russian officials, and suspected us of having some secret designs. As we endeavored to discover the number of their cattle, and to form an approximate estimate of their annual revenue, they naturally feared—having no conception of disinterested scientific curiosity—that these data were being collected for the purpose of increasing the taxes, or with some similar intention of a sinister kind. Very soon I perceived clearly that any information we

* I have adopted the ordinary English spelling of this name. The Kirghis and the Russians pronounce it "Tchinghis."

might here collect regarding the economic conditions of pastoral life would not be of much value, and I postponed my proposed studies to a more convenient season.

The Kirghis are, ethnographically speaking, closely allied to the Bashkirs, but differ from them both in physiognomy and language. Their features approach much nearer to the pure Mongol type, and their language is a distinct dialect, which a Bashkir or a Tartar of Kazán has some difficulty in understanding. They are professedly Mahometans, but their Mahometanism is not of a rigid kind, as may be seen by the fact that their women do not veil their faces even in the presence of Ghiaours—a laxness of which the Ghiaour will certainly not approve if he happen to be sensitive to female beauty and ugliness. Their mode of life differs little from that of the Bashkirs, but they have proportionately more land, and are consequently still able to lead a purely pastoral life. Near their western frontier, it is true, they annually let patches of land to the Russian peasants for the purpose of raising crops; but these encroachments can never advance very far, for the greater part of their territory is unsuited to agriculture, on account of the large admixture of salt which the soil contains. This fact will have an important influence on their future. Unlike the Bashkirs, who possess good arable land, and are consequently on the road to become agriculturists, they will in all probability continue to live exclusively by their flocks and herds.

To the south-west of the Lower Volga, in the flat region lying to the north of the Caucasus, we find another pastoral tribe, the Kalmuks, differing widely from the two former in language, in physiognomy, and in religion. Their language, a dialect of the Mongolian, has no close affinity with any other language in this part of the world. In respect of religion they are likewise isolated, for they are Buddhists, and have consequently no co-religionists nearer than India or Tibet. But it is their physiognomy that most strikingly distinguishes them from the surrounding peoples, and stamps them as Mongols of the purest water. To say simply that they are ugly would be to pay them an unmerited compliment. There is something almost infra-human in their ugliness. They show in an exaggerated degree all those repulsive traits which we see toned down and refined in the face of an average Chinaman. As they belong to one of the recognized races of mankind, we must assume that they have souls; but it is difficult, when we

see them for the first time, to believe that a human soul lurks behind their expressionless, flattened faces and small, dull, obliquely-set eyes. Placed in a group of them the Bashkir or even the ordinary Kirghis would appear beautiful by contrast. If the Tartar and Turkish races are really descended from ancestors of that type, then we must assume that they have received in the course of time a large admixture of Aryan or Semitic blood.

But we must not be too hard on the poor Kalmuks, or judge of their character by their unprepossessing appearance. They are by no means so unhuman as they look. Men who have lived among them have assured me that they are decidedly intelligent, especially in all matters relating to cattle, and that they are—though somewhat addicted to cattle-lifting and other primitive customs not tolerated in the more advanced stages of civilization—by no means wanting in some of the better qualities of human nature.

Until very recently there was a fourth pastoral tribe in this region—the Nogai Tartars. They occupied the plains to the north of the Sea of Azof, but they are no longer to be found there. Shortly after the Crimean War they emigrated to Turkey, and their lands are now occupied by Russian, German, Bulgarian, and Montenegrin colonists.

Among these pastoral tribes the Kalmuks may be regarded as recent intruders. They first appeared in the seventeenth century, and were long formidable on account of their great numbers and compact organization; but in 1771 the majority of them suddenly struck their tents and retreated to their old home in the north of the Celestial Empire. Those who remained were easily pacified, and have long since lost, under the influence of unbroken peace and a strong Russian administration, their old warlike spirit. Their latest military exploits were performed during the last years of the Napoleonic wars, and were not of a very serious kind; a troop of them accompanied the Russian army, and astonished Western Europe by their uncouth features, their strange costume, and their primitive accoutrements, among which their curious bows and arrows figured conspicuously.

The other pastoral tribes which I have mentioned are the last remnants of those nomadic hordes which from time immemorial down to a comparatively recent period held the vast plains of Southern Russia. The long struggle between those hordes and the agricultural colonists from the north-west—closely

resembling the long struggle between the Redskins and the white settlers on the prairies of North America—forms an important page of Russian history.

Like all young, vigorous agricultural races, the Russians have always shown a strong tendency to expand and to appropriate the territory of their neighbors. Towards the north and north-east they had little difficulty in giving free scope to this tendency, for they found there a country thinly peopled by peaceful Finnish tribes, who did not object to foreign colonists settling among them. But here on the Steppe they met with a very different reception. The country was quite as thinly peopled, but the inhabitants were of a different stamp and led a different kind of life—not peaceful agriculturists, but warlike nomads, who stoutly resisted all encroachments on their pasture-grounds, and considered cattle-lifting, kidnapping, and pillage as a legitimate and worthy occupation. “Their raids,” says an old Byzantine writer, “are as flashes of lightning, and their retreat is at once heavy and light—heavy from booty and light from the swiftness of their movements. For them a peaceful life is a misfortune, and a convenient opportunity for war is the height of felicity. Worst of all, they are more numerous than bees in spring; their numbers are innumerable.” “Having no fixed place of abode,” says another Byzantine authority, “they seek to conquer all lands and colonize none. They are flying people, and therefore cannot be caught. As they have neither towns nor villages, they must be hunted like wild beasts, and can be fitly compared only to griffins, which beneficent Nature has banished to uninhabited regions.” As a Persian distich, quoted by Vambéry, has it—

“They came, conquered, burned,
Pillaged, murdered, and went.”

Their raids are thus described by an old Russian chronicler:—
“They burn the villages, the farmyards, and the churches. The land is turned by them into a desert, and the overgrown fields become the lair of wild beasts. Many people are led away into slavery; others are tortured and killed, or die from hunger and thirst. Sad, weary, stiff from cold, with faces wan from woe, barefoot or naked, and torn by the thistles, the Russian prisoners trudge along through an unknown country, and, weeping, say to one another, ‘I am from such a town, and I from such a village.’”

And in harmony with the monastic chroniclers we hear the nameless Slavonic Ossian wailing for the fallen sons of Rūs: "In the Russian land is rarely heard the voice of the husbandman, but often the cry of the vultures, fighting with each other over the bodies of the slain; and the ravens scream as they fly to the spoil."

This struggle between agricultural colonization and nomadic barbarism went on for centuries with varying success. In the earliest period of Russian history the colonists advanced rapidly, and gained possession of a large portion of the Steppe; but in the thirteenth century the tide of fortune suddenly turned. The whole of the country was conquered by nomadic hordes, and for more than two centuries Russia was in a certain sense ruled by Tartar Khans. As I wish to speak at some length of this Tartar domination, I shall devote to it a separate chapter.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE TARTAR DOMINATION.

The Conquest—Genghis Khan and his People—Creation and Rapid Disintegration of the Mongol Empire—The Golden Horde—The Real Character of the Tartar Domination—Religious Toleration—Tartar System of Government—Grand Princes—The Princes of Moscow—Influence of the Tartar Domination—Practical Importance of the Subject.

THE Tartar invasion, with its direct and indirect consequences, is a subject which has far more than a mere antiquarian interest. To the influence of the Mongols are commonly attributed many peculiarities in the actual condition and national character of the Russians of the present day, and some writers would even have us believe that the men whom we call Russians are simply Tartars half disguised by a thin varnish of European civilization. Under these circumstances it may be well to inquire what the Tartar domination really was, and how far it affected the historical development and national character of the Russian people. If I cannot throw on the subject all the light that could be desired, I may at least do something towards dispelling certain current fallacies which too often gain credence.

The story of the conquest may be briefly told. In 1224 the chieftains of the Poloftsi—one of those pastoral tribes which roamed on the Steppe and habitually carried on a predatory warfare with the Russians of the south—sent deputies to Mistislaf the Brave, Prince of Gallicia, to inform him that their country had been invaded from the south-east by strong, cruel enemies called Tartars*—strange-looking men with brown faces, eyes small and wide apart, thick lips, broad shoulders, and black hair. “To-

* The word is properly “Tatar,” and the Russians write and pronounce it in this way, but I have preferred to retain the less correct and better known mode of writing it.

day," said the deputies, "they have seized our country, and tomorrow they will seize yours if you do not help us."

Mistislaf had probably no objection to the Poloftsi being annihilated by some tribe stronger and fiercer than themselves, for they gave him a great deal of trouble by their frequent raids; but he perceived the force of the argument about his own turn coming next, and thought it wise to assist his usually hostile neighbors. For the purpose of warding off the danger he called together the neighboring Princes, and urged them to join him in an expedition against the new enemy. The expedition was undertaken, and ended in disaster. On the Kalka, a small river falling into the Sea of Azof, the Russian army met the invaders, and was completely routed. The country was thereby opened to the victors, but they did not follow up their advantage. After advancing for some distance they suddenly wheeled round and disappeared.

Thus ended unexpectedly the first visit of these unwelcome strangers. Thirteen years afterwards they returned, and were not so easily got rid of. An enormous horde crossed the River Ural, and advanced into the heart of the country, pillaging, burning, devastating, and murdering. Nowhere did they meet with serious resistance. The Princes made no attempt to combine against the common enemy. Nearly all the principal towns were laid in ashes, and the inhabitants were killed or carried off as slaves. Having conquered Russia, they advanced Westward, and threw all Europe into alarm. The panic reached even England, and interrupted, it is said, for a time the herring fishing on the coast. Western Europe, however, escaped their ravages. After visiting Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Servia, and Dalmatia, they retreated to the Lower Volga, and the Russian Princes were summoned thither to do homage to the victorious Khan.

At first the Russians had only very vague notions as to who this terrible enemy was. The old chronicler remarks briefly:—"For our sins unknown peoples have appeared. No one knows who they are or whence they have come, or to what race and faith they belong. They are commonly called Tartars, but some call them Taurermen, and others Petchenegs. Who they really are is known only to God, and perhaps to wise men deeply read in books." Some of these "wise men deeply read in books" supposed them to be the idolatrous Moabites who had in Old Testa-

ment times harassed God's chosen people, whilst others thought that they must be the descendants of the men whom Gideon had driven out, of whom a revered saint had prophesied that they would come in the latter days and conquer the whole earth, from the East even unto the Euphrates, and from the Tigris even unto the Black Sea.

We are now happily in a position to dispense with such vague ethnographical speculations. From the accounts of several European travelers who visited Tartary about that time, and from the writings of various Oriental historians, we know a great deal about these barbarians who conquered Russia and frightened the Western nations.

The germ of the vast Horde which swept over Asia and advanced into the center of Europe was a small pastoral tribe living in the hilly country to the north of China, near the sources of the Amoor. This tribe was neither more warlike nor more formidable than its neighbors till near the close of the twelfth century, when there appeared in it a man who is described as "a mighty hunter before the Lord." Of him and his people we have a brief description by a Chinese author of the time :—"A man of gigantic stature, with broad forehead and long beard, and remarkable for his bravery. As to his people, their faces are broad, flat, and four-cornered, with prominent cheek-bones; their eyes have no upper eyelashes; they have very little hair in their beards and moustaches; their exterior is very repulsive." This man of gigantic stature was no other than Genghis Khan. He began by subduing and incorporating into his army the surrounding tribes, conquered with their assistance a great part of Northern China, and then, leaving one of his generals to complete the conquest of the Celestial Empire, he led his army westward with the ambitious design of conquering the whole world. "As there is but one God in heaven," he was wont to say, "so there should be but one ruler on earth;" and this one universal ruler he himself aspired to be.

A European army necessarily diminishes in force and its existence becomes more and more imperilled as it advances from its base of operations into a foreign and hostile country. Not so a Horde like that of Genghis Khan in a country such as that which it had to traverse. It had and needed no base of operations, for it took with it its flocks, its tents, and all its worldly goods.

Properly speaking, it was not an army at all, but rather a people in movement. The grassy steppes fed the flocks, and the flocks fed the warriors; and with such a simple commissariat system there was no necessity for keeping up communications with the point of departure. Instead of diminishing in numbers, the Horde constantly increased as it moved forward. The nomadic tribes which it encountered on its way, composed of men who found a home wherever they found pasture and drinking-water, required little persuasion to make them join the onward movement. By means of this terrible instrument of conquest Genghis succeeded in creating a colossal Empire, stretching from the Carpathians to the eastern shores of Asia, and from the Arctic Ocean to the Himalayas. If he did not realize his dream of becoming the ruler of the whole earth, he could at least boast that never in the history of the world had a single man ruled over such vast possessions.

Genghis was no mere ruthless destroyer; he was at the same time one of the greatest administrators the world has ever seen. But his administrative genius could not work miracles. His vast Empire, founded on conquest and composed of the most heterogeneous elements, had no principle of organic life in it, and could not possibly be long-lived. It had been created by him, and it perished with him. For some time after his death the dignity of Grand Khan was held by some one of his descendants, and the centralized administration was nominally preserved; but the local rulers rapidly emancipated themselves from the central authority, and within half a century after the death of its founder the great Mongol Empire was little more than "a geographical expression."

With the dismemberment of the Mongol Empire the danger for Eastern Europe was by no means at an end. The independent Hordes were scarcely less formidable than the Empire itself. A grandson of Genghis formed on the Russian frontier a new State, commonly known as Kiptchak or the Golden Horde, and built a capital called Seraï on one of the arms of the Lower Volga. This capital, which has since so completely disappeared that there is some doubt as to its site, is described by Ibn Batuta, who visited it in the fifteenth century, as a very great, populous, and beautiful city, possessing many mosques, fine market-places, and broad streets, in which were to be seen merchants from Babylon,

Egypt, Syria, and other countries. Here lived the Khans who kept Russia in subjection for two centuries.

In conquering Russia the Tartars had no wish to take possession of the soil, or to take into their own hands the local administration. What they wanted was not land, of which they had enough and to spare, but movable property which they might enjoy without giving up their pastoral, nomadic life. They applied, therefore, to Russia the same method of extracting supplies as they had used in other countries. As soon as their authority had been formally acknowledged they sent officials into the country to number the inhabitants and to collect an amount of tribute proportionate to the population. This was a severe burden for the people, not only on account of the sum demanded, but also on account of the manner in which it was raised. The exactions and cruelty of the tax-gatherers led to local insurrections, and the insurrections were of course always severely punished. But there was never any general military occupation of the country or any wholesale confiscations of land, and the existing political organization was left undisturbed. The modern method of dealing with annexed provinces was totally unknown to the Tartars. The Khans never for a moment dreamed of attempting to Tartarize their Russian subjects. They demanded simply an oath of allegiance from the Princes,* and a certain sum of tribute from the people. The vanquished were allowed to retain their land, their religion, their language, their courts of justice, and all their other institutions.

The nature of the Tartar domination is well illustrated by the policy which the conquerors adopted towards the Russian Church. For more than half a century after the conquest the religion of the Tartars was a mixture of Buddhism and Paganism, with traces of Sabæism or fire-worship. During this period Christianity was more than simply tolerated. The Grand Khan Kuyuk caused a Christian chapel to be erected near his domicile, and one of his successors, Khubilai, was in the habit of publicly taking part in the Easter festivals. In 1261 the Khan of the Golden Horde allowed the Russians to found a bishopric in his capital, and several members of his family adopted Christianity. One of them

* During the Tartar domination Russia was composed of a large number of independent principalities.

even founded a monastery, and became a saint of the Russian Church ! The Orthodox clergy were exempted from the poll-tax, and in the charters granted to them it was expressly declared that if any one committed blasphemy against the faith of the Russians he should be put to death. Some time afterward the Golden Horde was converted to Islam, but the Khans did not on that account change their policy. They continued to favor the clergy, and their protection was long remembered. Many generations later, when the property of the Church was threatened by the autocratic power, refractory ecclesiastics contrasted the policy of the Orthodox Sovereign with that of the "godless Tartars," much to the advantage of the latter.

At first there was and could be very little mutual confidence between the conquerors and the conquered. The Princes anxiously looked for an opportunity of throwing off the galling yoke, and the people chafed under the exactions and cruelty of the tribute-collectors, whilst the Khans took precautions to prevent insurrection, and threatened to devastate the country if their authority was not respected. But in the course of time this mutual distrust and hostility greatly lessened. The Princes gradually perceived that all attempts at resistance would be fruitless, and became reconciled to their new position. Instead of seeking to throw off the Khan's authority, they sought to gain his favor, in the hope of thereby forwarding their personal interests. For this purpose they paid frequent visits to the Tartar chief, made rich presents to his wives and courtiers, received from him charters confirming their authority, and sometimes even married members of his family. Some of them used the favor thus acquired for extending their possessions at the expense of neighboring Princes of their own race, and did not hesitate to call in Tartar Hordes to their assistance. The Khans, in their turn, placed greater confidence in their vassals, intrusted them with the task of collecting the tribute, recalled their own officials who were a constant eyesore to the people, and abstained from all interference in the internal affairs of the principalities so long as the tribute was regularly paid. The Princes acted, in short, as the Khan's lieutenants, and became to a certain extent Tartarized. Some of them carried this policy so far that they were reproached by the people with "loving beyond measure the Tartars and their language, and with giving them too freely land, and gold, and goods of every kind."

Had the Khans of the Golden Horde been prudent, far-seeing statesmen, they might have long retained their supremacy over Russia. In reality they showed themselves miserably deficient in political talent. Seeking merely to extract from the country as much tribute as possible, they overlooked all higher considerations, and by this culpable shortsightedness brought about their own political ruin. Instead of keeping all the Russian Princes on the same level and thereby rendering them all equally feeble, they were constantly bribed or cajoled into giving to one or more of their vassals a pre-eminence over the others. At first this pre-eminence seems to have consisted in little more than the empty title of Grand Prince; but the vassals thus favored soon transformed the barren distinction into a genuine power, by arrogating to themselves the exclusive right of holding direct communications with the Horde, and compelling the minor Princes to deliver to them the Tartar tribute. If any of the lower Princes refused to acknowledge this intermediate authority, the Grand Prince could easily crush them by representing them at the Horde as rebels who did not pay their tribute. Such an accusation would cause the accused to be summoned before the Supreme Tribunal, where the procedure was extremely summary and the Grand Prince had always the means of obtaining a decision in his own favor.

Of all the Princes who strove in this way to increase their influence, the most successful were the Princes of Moscow. They were not a chivalrous race, or one with which the severe moralist can sympathize, but they were largely endowed with cunning, tact, and perseverance, and were little hampered by conscientious scruples. Having early discovered that the liberal distribution of money at the Tartar court was the surest means of gaining favor, they lived parsimoniously at home and spent their savings at the Horde. To secure the continuance of the favor thus acquired, they were ready to form matrimonial alliances with the Khan's family, and to act zealously as his lieutenants. When Novgorod, the haughty, turbulent Republic, refused to pay the yearly tribute, they quelled the insurrection and punished the leaders; and when the inhabitants of Tver rose against the Tartars and compelled their Prince to make common cause with them, the wily Muscovite hastened to the Tartar court and received from the Khan the revolted principality, with 50,000 Tartars to support his authority.

Thus those cunning Moscow Princes "loved the Tartars beyond measure" so long as the Khan was irresistibly powerful, but as his power waned they stood forth as his rivals. When the Golden Horde, like the great Empire of which it had once formed a part, fell to pieces, these ambitious Princes read the signs of the times, and put themselves at the head of the liberation movement, which was at first unsuccessful but ultimately freed the country from the hated Tartar yoke.

From this brief sketch of the Tartar domination the reader will readily perceive that it did not by any means Tartarize the country. The Tartars never settled in Russia Proper, and never amalgamated with the people. So long as they retained their semi-pagan, semi-Buddhistic religion, a certain number of their notables became Christians and were absorbed by the Russian Noblesse; but as soon as the Horde adopted Islam, this movement was arrested. There was no blending of the two races such as has taken place—and is still taking place—between the Russian peasantry and the Finnish tribes of the North. The Russians remained Christians, and the Tartars remained Mahometans; and this difference of religion raised an impassable barrier between the two nationalities.

It must, however, be admitted that the Tartar domination, though it had little influence on the life and habits of the people, had a very deep and lasting influence on the political development of the nation. At the time of the conquest Russia was composed of a large number of independent principalities, all governed by descendants of Rurik. As these principalities were not geographical or ethnographical units, but mere artificial, arbitrarily defined districts, which were regularly subdivided or combined according to the hereditary rights of the Princes, it is highly probable that they would in any case have been sooner or later united under one scepter; but it is quite certain that the policy of the Khans helped to accelerate this unification and to create the autocratic power which has since been wielded by the Tsars. If the principalities had been united without foreign interference, we should probably have found in the united State some form of political organization corresponding to that which existed in the component parts—some mixed form of government, in which the political power would have been more or less equally divided between the Tsar and the people. The Tartar rule inter-

rupted this normal development by extinguishing all free political life. The first Tsars of Muscovy were the political descendants not of the old independent Princes, but of the Tartar Khans. It may be said, therefore, that the autocratic power, which has been during the last four centuries out of all comparison the most important factor in Russian history, was in a certain sense created by the Tartar domination.

The reader will now understand why this subject has more than a mere antiquarian interest. The position of the Christians under the Khans of the Golden Horde was very like the present position of the Christians in Turkey. For some time after the conquest Russia was ruled as Bulgaria is now; then she obtained an autonomy similar to that of Servia and Roumania at the present day; and ultimately she gained complete independence. Thus the Russians long formed the vanguard in the cause of Slavonic emancipation. They were the first of the Slavonic peoples to fall under the Tartar yoke, and the first to emancipate themselves. This they have not forgotten, and we cannot wonder that they should now sympathize with those cognate races which are striving to follow their example. The epigrammatic saying that the sympathy of the Russian people with the Servians and Bulgarians is a mere "philological sentiment," cannot be accepted by any one who knows the history of Eastern Europe.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE COSSACKS.

Tartar Raids—Slave-markets of the Crimea—The Military Cordon and the Free Cossacks—"Beyond the Rapids"—The Zaporovian Commonwealth compared with Sparta and with the Mediæval Military Orders—The Cossacks of the Don, of the Volga, and of the Ural—Border Warfare—The Modern Cossacks—Land Tenure among the Cossacks of the Don—The Transition from Pastoral to Agricultural Life—"Universal Law" of Social Development—Communal *versus* Private Property—Flogging as a means of Land-registration.

TO conquer the Tartars was no easy task, but to pacify them and introduce law and order amongst them was a work of much greater difficulty. Long after they had lost their political independence they retained their old pastoral mode of life, and harassed the agricultural population of the outlying provinces in the same way as the Red Indians harass the white colonists in the western territories of America at the present day. What considerably added to the difficulty was that a large section of the Horde, inhabiting the Crimea and the steppe to the north of the Black Sea, escaped conquest by submitting to the Ottoman Turks and becoming tributaries of the Sultan. The Turks were at that time a formidable aggressive power, with which the Tsars of Muscovy were too weak to cope successfully, and the Khan of the Crimea could always, when hard pressed by his northern neighbors, obtain assistance from Constantinople. This potentate exercised a nominal authority over the pastoral tribes which roamed on the steppe between the Crimea and the Russian frontier, but he had neither the power nor the desire to control their aggressive tendencies. Their raids in Russian and Polish territory insured, among other advantages, a regular and plentiful supply of slaves, which formed the chief article of export from Kaffa—the modern Theodosia—and from the other seaports of the coast.

Of this slave trade, which flourished down to 1783, when the

Crimea was finally conquered and annexed to Russia, we have a graphic account by an eye-witness, a Lithuanian traveler of the sixteenth century. "Ships from Asia," he says, "bring arms, clothes, and horses to the Crimean Tartars, and start on the homeward voyage laden with slaves. It is for this kind of merchandise alone that the Crimean markets are remarkable. Slaves may be always had for sale as a pledge or as a present, and every one rich enough to have a horse deals in them. If a man wishes to buy clothes, arms, or horses, and does not happen to have at the moment any slaves, he takes on credit the articles required, and makes a formal promise to deliver at a given term a certain number of people of our blood—being convinced that he can get by that time the requisite number. And these promises are always accurately fulfilled, as if those who made them had always a supply of our people in their courtyards. A Jewish money-changer, sitting at the gate of Tauris and seeing constantly the countless multitude of our countrymen led in as captives, asked us whether there still remained any people in our land, and whence came such a multitude of them. The stronger of these captives, branded on the forehead and the cheeks and manacled or fettered, are tortured by severe labor all day, and are shut up in dark cells at night. They are kept alive by small quantities of food, composed chiefly of the flesh of animals that have died—putrid, covered with maggots, disgusting even to dogs. Women, who are more tender, are treated in a different fashion; some of them who can sing and play are employed to amuse the guests at festivals. When the slaves are led out for sale they walk to the market-place in single file, like storks on the wing, in whole dozens, chained together by the neck, and are there sold by auction. The auctioneer shouts loudly that they are 'the newest arrivals, simple, and not cunning, lately captured, from the people of the kingdom (Poland), and not from Muscovy;' for the Muscovite race, being crafty and deceitful, does not bring a good price. This kind of merchandise is appraised with great accuracy in the Crimea, and is bought by foreign merchants at a high price, in order to be sold at a still higher rate to blacker nations, such as Saracens, Persians, Indians, Arabs, Syrians, and Assyrians. When a purchase is made the teeth are examined, to see that they are neither few nor discolored. At the same time the more hidden parts of the body are carefully inspected, and if a mole, excrescence, wound, or other latent defect

is discovered, the bargain is rescinded. But notwithstanding these investigations the cunning slave-dealers and brokers succeed in cheating the buyers ; for when they have valuable boys and girls, they do not at once produce them, but first fatten them, clothe them in silk, and put powder and rouge on their cheeks, so as to sell them at a better price. Sometimes beautiful and perfect maidens of our nations bring their weight in gold. This takes place in all the towns of the peninsula, but especially in Kaffa." *

To protect the agricultural population of the steppe against the raids of these thieving, cattle-lifting, kidnapping neighbors, the Tsars of Muscovy and the Kings of Poland built forts, constructed palisades, dug trenches, and kept up a regular military cordon. The troops composing this cordon were called Cossacks, but these were not the Cossacks best known to history and romance. The genuine "Free Cossacks" lived beyond the frontier on the debatable land which lay between the two hostile races, and there they formed self-governing military communities. Each one of the rivers flowing southwards—the Dnieper, the Don, the Volga, and the Yaïk or Ural—was held by a community of these Free Cossacks, and no one, whether Christian or Tartar, was allowed to pass through their territory without their permission. Officially they were Russians, professed champions of Orthodox Christianity, and—with the exception of those of the Dnieper—loyal subjects of the Tsar, but in reality they were something different. Though they were Russian by origin, language, and sympathy, the habit of kidnapping Tartar women introduced among them a certain admixture of Tartar blood. Though self-constituted champions of Christianity and haters of Islam, they troubled themselves very little with religion, and did not submit to the ecclesiastical authorities. As to their political status, it cannot be easily defined. Whilst professing allegiance and devotion to the Tsar, they did not think it necessary to obey him, except in so far as his orders suited their own convenience. And the Tsar, it must be confessed, acted towards them in a similar fashion. When he found it convenient he called them his faithful subjects ; and when complaints were made to him about their raids on Turkish territory, he declared that they were not his subjects, but runaways and brigands, and that the Sultan might punish them

* Michalonis Litvani, "De moribus Tartarorum Fragmina," X., Basilie, 1615.

as he thought fit. At the same time, however, the so-called runaways and brigands regularly received supplies and ammunition from Moscow, as is amply proved by recently-published documents. Down to the middle of the seventeenth century the Cossacks of the Dnieper stood in a similar relation to the Polish kings, but at that time they threw off their allegiance to Poland, and became subjects of the Tsars of Muscovy.

Of these semi-independent military communities, which formed a continuous barrier along the southern and south-eastern frontier, the most celebrated were the Zaporovians* of the Dnieper, and the Cossacks of the Don.

The head-quarters or capital of the Zaporovians was a fortified camp on the Dnieper, below the point where a ridge of rocks, lying across the bed of the river, forms a series of rapids. On approaching it from the steppe the traveler first entered a faubourg or bazaar, in which there was a considerable population of Jewish traders. At the further end of this faubourg stood a fortified tower with a big gate, beyond which lay a wide, open space, surrounded by thirty-eight enormous wooden sheds. In each of these sheds, which were simply large, scantily-furnished halls, lived a *kurén*, or troop of Cossacks, containing sometimes as many as 600 men. Here during the day the members of the *kurén* assembled for the common meals, and here at night they slept upon the floor. In the open space were held the general assemblies for the yearly election of the Atamán, or chief, and for the discussion of all important questions touching the public weal. The assemblies were always noisy, and sometimes ended in bloodshed, for the Zaporovians were little accustomed to exercise self-control, and were quick to resent an insulting word from friend or foe. Here, too, might be seen, in ordinary peaceful times, little groups of Cossacks—too often, it must be confessed, in a state of intoxication—strolling about with their beloved “lulki” (tobacco-pipes), or basking lazily in the sunshine, and talking about the prospects of the fishing season, or about some intended raid on the Tartar aouls. Beyond this space, which might be called the forum, was a smaller inclosure containing the

* The name “Zaporovians,” by which they are known in the West, is a corruption of the Russian word Zaporozhtsi, which means “those who live beyond the Rapids.”

public treasury, the residence of the Atamán—a small, modest wooden house, like that of a well-to-do peasant—and a church dedicated to the Virgin. Within these two inclosures no woman was ever allowed to enter.

The Zaporovian Commonwealth has been compared sometimes to ancient Sparta, and sometimes to the medieval Military Orders, but it had in reality quite a different character. In Sparta the nobles kept in subjection a large population of slaves, and were themselves constantly under the severe discipline of the magistrates. These Cossacks of the Dnieper, on the contrary, lived by fishing, hunting, and marauding, and knew nothing of discipline, except in time of war. Amongst all the inhabitants of the Setch—so the fortified camp was called—there reigned the most perfect equality. The common saying, “Bear patiently, Cossack, you will one day be Atamán!” was often realized; for every year the office-bearers laid down the insignia of office in presence of the general assembly, and after thanking the brotherhood for the honor they had enjoyed, retired to their former position of common Cossack. At the election which followed this ceremony, any member could be chosen chief of his *kurén*, and any chief of a *kurén* could be chosen Atamán.

The comparison of these bold Borderers with the medieval Military Orders is scarcely less forced. They called themselves, indeed, “Lytsars”—a corruption of the Russian word “Ritsar,” which is in its turn a corruption of the German “Ritter”—talked of knightly honor (*lytsarskaya tchest’*), and sometimes proclaimed themselves the champions of Greek Orthodoxy against the Roman Catholicism of the Poles, and the Mahometanism of the Tartars; but religion occupied in their minds a very secondary place. Their great object in life was the acquisition of booty. To attain this object they lived in almost perpetual warfare with the Tartars, lifted their cattle, pillaged their aouls, swept the Black Sea in flotillas of small boats, and occasionally sacked important sea-coast towns such as Varna and Sinope. When Tartar booty could not be easily obtained, they turned their attention to the Slavonic populations; and when hard pressed by Christian potentates they did not hesitate to put themselves under the protection of the Sultan.

The Cossacks of the Don, of the Volga, and of the Yaïk had a somewhat different organization. They had no fortified camp

like the Setch, but lived in villages, and assembled as necessity demanded. As they were completely beyond the sphere of Polish influence, they knew nothing about "knightly honor" and similar conceptions of Western chivalry; they even adopted many Tartar customs, and loved in time of peace to strut about in gorgeous Tartar costumes. Besides this, they were nearly all emigrants from Great Russia, and mostly Old Ritualists or Sectarrians, whilst the Zaporovians were Little Russians and Orthodox.

These military communities rendered valuable service to Russia. The best means of protecting the southern frontier was to have as allies a large body of men leading the same kind of life and capable of carrying on the same kind of warfare as the nomadic marauders; and such a body of men were the Free Cossacks. The sentiment of self-preservation and the desire of booty kept them constantly on the alert. By sending out small parties in all directions, by "procuring tongues"—that is to say, by kidnapping and torturing straggling Tartars with a view to extracting information from them—by keeping spies in the enemy's territory, and by similar devices, they were generally apprised beforehand of any intended incursion. When danger threatened, the ordinary precautions were redoubled. Day and night patrols kept watch at the points where the enemy was expected, and as soon as sure signs of his approach were discovered, a pile of tarred barrels prepared for the purpose was fired to give the alarm. Rapidly the signal was repeated at one point of observation after another, and by this primitive system of telegraphy in the course of a few hours the whole district was up in arms. If the invaders were not too numerous, they were at once attacked and driven back. If they were too numerous to be successfully resisted, they were allowed to pass, but a troop of Cossacks was sent to pillage their aouls in their absence, whilst another and larger force was collected, in order to intercept them when they were returning home laden with booty. Thus many a nameless battle was fought on the trackless steppe, and many brave men fell unhonored and unsung—

" *Illacrymabiles*
Urgentur ignotique longa
Nocte, carent quia vate sacro."

Notwithstanding these valuable services, the Cossack communi-

ties were a constant source of diplomatic difficulties and political dangers. As they paid very little attention to the orders of the Government, they supplied the Sultan with any number of *casus belli*, and were often ready to turn their arms against the power to which they professed allegiance. During "the troublous times," for example, when the national existence was endangered by civil strife and foreign invasion, they overran the country, robbing, pillaging, and burning as they were wont to do in the Tartar aouls. At a later period the Don Cossacks twice raised formidable insurrections—first under Stenka Razin (1670), and secondly under Pugatchéf (1773)—and during the war between Peter the Great and Charles XII. of Sweden, the Zaporovians took the side of the Swedish king.

The Government naturally strove to put an end to this danger, and ultimately succeeded. All the Cossacks were deprived of their independence, but the fate of the various communities was different. Those of the Volga were transferred to the Terek, where they had abundant occupation in guarding the frontier against the incursions of the Eastern Caucasian tribes. The Zaporovians held tenaciously to their "Dnieper liberties," and resisted all interference, till they were forcibly disbanded in the time of Catherine II. The majority of them fled to Turkey, where some of their descendants are still to be found, and the remainder were settled on the Kubán, where they could lead their old life by carrying on an irregular warfare with the tribes of the Western Caucasus. Since the capture of Shamyl and the pacification of the Caucasus, this Cossack population, extending in an unbroken line from the Sea of Azof to the Caspian, have been able to turn their attention to peaceful pursuits, and now raise large quantities of wheat for exportation; but they still retain their martial bearing, and some of them regret the good old times when a brush with the Circassians was an ordinary occurrence and the work of tilling the soil was often diversified with a more exciting kind of occupation. The romance of their life is gone, and the most formidable enemy with which they have now to contend is the wild boar living in the forests of reeds which cover the low, marshy banks of the water-courses; but a thousand thrilling incidents of border warfare are still fresh in their memory. More than once during my travels in this region the tedium of long journeys was enlivened by my Yemstchik relating to me stirring

incidents from his personal experience. The Circassians, it seems, rarely attacked their opponents openly, but sought to pass through the line unperceived in order to plunder the agricultural population in the rear; and the rapidity of their movements, together with their intimate knowledge of the country, often enabled them to do this successfully. After seeing many specimens of both races, I could appreciate the wisdom of these tactics, and had no difficulty in believing that the light, agile Circassians, however brave they may have been, were no match for the big, stalwart Cossacks in a fair, hand-to-hand fight, in which weight could be brought into play. Nowhere, indeed, have I met—except perhaps in Montenegro—with such magnificent specimens of the *genus homo* as among these gigantic, moustachioed descendants of the Zaporovians. If there are still any authors of the Fenimore Cooper school who wish to collect materials for exciting tales of adventure, I would recommend them to learn Russian and spend a few months in the Cossack stanitsas of the Terek and the Kubán.

The Cossacks of the Yaïk and the Don have been allowed to remain in their old homes, but they have been deprived of their independence and self-government, and their social organization has been completely changed. The boisterous popular assemblies which formerly decided all public affairs have been abolished, and the custom of choosing the Atamán and other office-bearers by popular election has been replaced by a system of regular promotion, according to rules elaborated in St. Petersburg.

This change has destroyed the social equality which was in old times a distinctive feature of these communities. The officers and their families now compose a kind of hereditary aristocracy, which has succeeded in appropriating, by means of Imperial grants, a large portion of the land which was formerly common property. The common Cossacks are now simply a species of mounted militia. They possess a large amount of fertile land, and are exempted from all direct taxation; and in return for these privileges they are obliged to equip themselves at their own expense, and to serve at home or elsewhere as the military authorities think fit to command. In time of peace the majority of them are allowed to remain at home, and have to turn out merely for a short period in summer; but a very large number of them are constantly required for active service, and are to be met with

in all parts of the Empire, from the Prussian to the Chinese frontier. In the Asiatic Provinces their services are invaluable. Capable of enduring an incredible amount of fatigue and all manner of privations, they can live and thrive in conditions which would soon disable regular troops. The capacity of self-adaptation, which is characteristic of the Russian people generally, is possessed by them in the highest degree. When placed on some distant Asiatic frontier they can at once transform themselves into squatters—building their own house, raising crops of grain, and living as colonists without neglecting their military duties. If they require cattle they can “lift” them, either in the territory beyond the frontier or in the region which they are supposed to protect—precisely as their ancestors did centuries ago. Thus they do their work effectually at a very small cost to the Imperial exchequer. How far the system is acceptable to the local population is, of course, a different question. In outlying provinces I have often heard people complain that Cossack protection was, on the whole, rather expensive; but perhaps these complaints are unworthy of attention, for people everywhere object to their own local rates, and wish to have them defrayed by the national treasury.

I have sometimes heard it asserted by military men that the Cossack organization is an antiquated institution, and that the soldiers which it produces, however useful they may be in Central Asia, would be of little service in regular European warfare. How far this is true I cannot pretend to say, for it is a subject on which a civilian has no right to speak, but I may remark that the Cossacks themselves are not by any means of that opinion. They regard themselves as the most valuable troops which the Tsar possesses, believing themselves capable of performing anything within the bounds of human possibility, and a good deal that lies beyond that limit. More than once Don Cossacks have assured me that if the Tsar had allowed them to fit out a flotilla of small boats during the Crimean War they would have captured the British fleet, as their ancestors used to capture Turkish galleys on the Black Sea!

During my journeys in the country of the Don Cossacks I picked up some information concerning the land tenure, and I mean to communicate it to the reader, because it is in itself curious, and because it tends to throw light on some of the primi-

tive stages of social development—especially on that singular custom of periodically distributing the communal land, which I described in a former chapter.

In old times, throughout the whole territory of the Don Cossacks, agriculture was prohibited on pain of death. It is generally supposed that this measure was adopted with a view to preserve the martial spirit of the inhabitants, but this hypothesis appears to me extremely far-fetched and very improbable. The great majority of the Cossacks, averse to all regular, laborious occupations, wished to live by fishing, hunting, cattle-breeding, and marauding, but there was always amongst them a considerable number of immigrants—runaway serfs from the interior, who had been accustomed to live by agriculture. These latter wished to raise crops on the fertile virgin soil, and if they had been allowed to do so they would have to some extent spoiled the pastures. We have here, I believe, the true reason for the above-mentioned prohibition, and this view is strongly confirmed by analogous facts which I have observed in another locality. In the Kirghis territory the poorer inhabitants of the aouls near the frontier, having few or no cattle, wish to let part of the common land to the neighboring Russian peasantry for agricultural purposes; but the richer inhabitants, who possess flocks and herds, strenuously oppose this movement, and would doubtless prohibit it under pain of death if they had the power, because all agricultural encroachments diminish the pasture-land.

Whatever was the real reason of the prohibition, practical necessity proved in the long run too strong for the anti-agriculturists. As the population augmented and the opportunities for marauding decreased, the majority had to overcome their repugnance to husbandry; and soon large patches of plowed land or waving grain were to be seen in the vicinity of the “stanitsas,” as the Cossack villages are termed. At first there was no attempt to regulate this new use of the *ager publicus*. Each Cossack who wished to raise a crop plowed and sowed wherever he thought fit, and retained as long as he chose the land thus appropriated; and when the soil began to show signs of exhaustion, he abandoned his plot and plowed elsewhere. But this unregulated use of the communal property could not long continue. As the number of agriculturists increased, quarrels frequently arose and sometimes terminated in bloodshed. Still worse evils appeared when mar-

kets were created in the vicinity, and it became possible to sell the grain for exportation. In some stanitsas the richer families appropriated enormous quantities of the common land by using several teams of oxen, or by hiring peasants in the nearest villages to come and plow for them ; and instead of abandoning the land after raising two or three crops they retained possession of it, and came to regard it as their private property. Thus the whole of the arable land, or at least the best parts of it, became actually, if not legally, the private property of a few families, whilst the less energetic or less fortunate inhabitants of the stanitsa had only parcels of comparatively barren soil, or had no land whatever, and descended to the position of agricultural laborers.

If this had taken place in a British colony, or in some other community living under the *laissez faire* system of administration, the communal land would have been in this way permanently converted into private property, and those who were not proprietors would have been obliged to gain a livelihood as servants or to emigrate elsewhere. In a Cossack stanitsa there were serious obstacles to this course of events. The landless members of the community could not emigrate, because they were practically chained to the locality by the military organization, and they required to have some property in order to equip themselves for military service and support their families during their absence. They were, in fact, in the anomalous position of feudal vassals obliged to render military service but deprived of the land necessary for the fulfillment of their obligations, and they naturally murmured against the monopolists who had expropriated them. As the discontent led to serious disorders, a remedy had to be sought. First a palliative measure was tried—the Commune, being responsible to the Government for the number of men required for active service, equipped those who were too poor to equip themselves. But this did not satisfy the landless members. They justly complained that they had to bear the same burdens as those who possessed the land, and that therefore they ought to enjoy the same privileges. The old spirit of equality was still strong amongst them, and they ultimately succeeded in asserting their rights. In accordance with their demands the appropriated land was confiscated by the Commune, and the system of periodical distributions, which I have already described, was introduced. By this system each adult male possesses a share of the land.

The mode of distribution differs in different localities. Here, for instance, is the arrangement adopted in Kazánskaya Stanitsa. The whole of the arable land, with the exception of a portion reserved for minors, has been divided into a number of lots corresponding to the number of males who have attained the age of seventeen. The arrangement has been made for a term of six years. Those who attain the age of seventeen during that period receive a portion of the land held in reserve. Widows receive an amount proportionate to the number of their young children : those who have less than three receive half a share ; those who have three receive a full share ; and those who have more than three receive two shares. Each member, as soon as he receives his share, is free to do with it as he pleases ; one cultivates it himself, another lets it for a yearly sum, and a third gives it to a neighbor on condition of receiving a certain portion of the produce. Some of the richer families cultivate a considerable area, for there are always many members willing to sell the usufruct of their portions. A family may buy a number of shares for the whole term before the distribution takes place, and receive all the shares in one lot. In consequence of this practice there are still a number of members who are practically landless ; but they have no ground for complaint, for they voluntarily sold their right, and they will be duly re-instated at the next general re-distribution.

Let me now explain how these facts tend to throw light on some of the dark questions of social development in its early stages.

The investigations which have been recently made regarding primitive institutions by Sir Henry Maine, M. de Laveleye, and others,* raise a strong presumption that all peoples have, at some period of their history, possessed village communities similar to those which still exist in Russia. "We can now prove," says M. de Laveleye,† "that these communities have existed among the most diverse peoples—among the old Germans and in ancient

* Among the latest contributions to this subject is a brochure, which ought to be studied by those who take an interest in the subject. It is by Mr. Kovalefski, and is entitled "*Otcherk istorii raspadeniya obshtchinnago zemlevladēniya v kantonē Vaadt*," London, 1876.

† "*De la Propriété et de ses Formes Primitives*," Paris, 1874.

Italy ; in Peru and in China ; in Mexico and in India ; among the Scandinavians and among the Arabs—and that they have everywhere possessed the same characteristics. Thus finding the institution in all climates and among all peoples, we may regard it as a necessary phase in the development of society, and may perceive in it a kind of universal law governing the evolution of all forms of landed property.” Now the facts which I have adduced, when taken in conjunction with what has been said in a previous chapter regarding the transition from pastoral to agricultural life, help us to understand, as it seems to me, this peculiar phase of social development and the “universal law” to which M. de Laveleye alludes.

So long as a village community leads a purely pastoral life, and possesses an abundance of land, there is no conceivable reason why the individuals or the families of which it is composed should divide the land into private lots, and there are very potent reasons why they should not adopt such a course. To give the division of the land any practical significance, it would be necessary to raise fences of some kind, and these fences, requiring for their construction an enormous amount of labor, would prove merely a useless incumbrance, for it is much more convenient that all the sheep and cattle should graze together. If there is a scarcity of pasture, and consequently a conflict of interest among the families, the enjoyment of the common land will be regulated not by raising fences, but by simply limiting the number of sheep and cattle which each family is entitled to put upon the pasturage, as is done in many Russian villages at the present day. When any one desires to keep more sheep and cattle than the maximum to which he is entitled, he pays to the others a certain compensation. Thus, we see, in pastoral life the dividing of the common land is unnecessary and inexpedient, and consequently private property in land is not likely to come into existence.

With the introduction of agriculture appears a tendency to divide the land among the families composing the community, for each family living by husbandry requires a definite portion of the soil. If the land suitable for agricultural purposes be plentiful, each head of a family may be allowed to take possession of as much of it as he requires, as was formerly done in the Cossack stanitsas, and as is still done in some of the Russian colonies in Siberia ; if, on the contrary, the area of arable land is small, as is

the case in some Bashkir aouls, there will probably be a regular allotment of it among the families.

With the tendency to divide the land into definite portions arises a conflict between the principle of Communal and the principle of Private property. Those who obtain definite portions of the soil are in general likely to keep them and transmit them to their descendants. In a country, however, like the Steppe—and it is only of such countries that I am at present speaking—the nature of the soil and the system of agriculture militate against this conversion of simple possession into a right of property. A plot of land is commonly cultivated for only three or four years in succession. It is then abandoned for at least double that period, and the cultivators remove to some other portion of the communal territory. After a certain time, it is true, they return to the old portion, which has been in the meantime lying fallow ; but as the soil is tolerably equal in quality, the families or individuals have no reason to desire the precise plots which they formerly possessed. Under such circumstances the principle of private property in the land is not likely to strike root ; each family insists on possessing a certain *quantity* rather than a certain *plot* of land, and contents itself with a right of usufruct, whilst the right of property remains in the hands of the Commune ; and it must not be forgotten that the difference between usufruct and property is here of great practical importance, for so long as the Commune retains the right of property it may re-allot the land in any way it thinks fit.

As the population increases and land becomes less plentiful, the primitive method of agriculture above alluded to gives place to a somewhat less primitive method, commonly known as “the three-field system.” According to this system the cultivators do not migrate periodically from one part of the communal territory to another, but till always the same fields, and are obliged to manure the plots which they occupy. The principle of communal property rarely survives this change, for by long possession the families acquire a prescriptive right to the portions which they cultivate, and those who manure their land well naturally object to exchange it for land which has been held by indolent, improvident neighbors. In Russia, however, this change has not destroyed the principle of communal property. Though the three-field system has been in use for many generations in the central provinces, the

communal principle, with its periodical re-allotment of the land, still remains intact.

I would willingly enter here on an investigation of this singular phenomenon which distinguishes Russia from the countries of Western Europe, but it is a subject which can only be treated at considerable length, and I fear that the reader's patience has been already fully exhausted by the foregoing abstruse disquisition. Let us return, therefore, to the Don Cossacks.

For the student of social development, the past history and actual condition of the Don Cossacks present much that is interesting and instructive. He may there see, for instance, how an aristocracy can be created by military promotion, and how serfage may originate and become a recognized institution without any legislative enactment. If he takes an interest in peculiar manifestations of religious thought and feeling, he will find a rich field of investigation in the countless religious sects; and if he is a collector of quaint old customs, he will not lack occupation.

One curious custom, which has very recently died out, I may here mention by way of illustration. As the Cossacks knew very little about land-surveying, and still less about land-registration, the precise boundary between two contiguous "yoorts"—as the communal land of a stanitsa was called—was often a matter of uncertainty and a fruitful source of disputes. When the boundary was once determined, the following original method of registering it was employed. All the boys of the two stanitsas were collected and driven in a body like sheep to the intervening frontier. The whole population then walked along the frontier that had been agreed upon, and at each landmark a number of boys were soundly whipped and allowed to run home! This was done in the hope that the victims would remember, as long as they lived, the spot where they had received their unmerited castigation. The device, I have been assured, was generally very effective, but it was not always quite successful. Whether from the castigation not being always sufficiently severe, or from some other defect in the method, it sometimes happened that disputes afterwards arose, and the whipped boys, now grown up to manhood, gave conflicting testimony. When such a case occurred the following expedient was adopted. One of the oldest inhabitants was chosen as arbiter, and made to swear on the Scriptures that he would act honestly to the

best of his knowledge ; then, taking an Icon in his hand, he walked along what he believed to be the old frontier. Whether he made mistakes or not, his decision was accepted by both parties and regarded as final. This custom existed in some stanitsas down to the year 1850, when the boundaries were clearly determined by Government officials.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FOREIGN COLONISTS ON THE STEPPE.

The Steppe—Variety of Races, Languages, and Religions—The German Colonists—In what sense the Russians are an Imitative People—The Menonites—Climate and Arboriculture—Bulgarian Colonists—Tartar-speaking Greeks—Jewish Agriculturists—Russification—A Circassian Scotchman—Numerical Strength of the Foreign Element—Its Social and Political Importance.

IN European Russia the struggle between agriculture and nomadic barbarism is now a thing of the past, and the fertile Steppe, which was for centuries a battle-ground of the Aryan and Turanian races, has been incorporated into the dominions of the Tsar. The nomadic races have been partly driven out and partly pacified and parked in "reserves," and the territory which they so long and so stubbornly defended is now studded with peaceful villages and tilled by laborious agriculturists.

In traversing this region the ordinary tourist will find little to interest him. He will see nothing which he can possibly dignify by the name of scenery, and he may journey on for many days without having any occasion to make an entry in his note-book. If he should happen, however, to be an ethnologist and linguist, he may find occupation, for he will here meet with fragments of very many different races and a variety of foreign tongues sufficient to test the polyglot acquirements of a Mezzofanti.

This ethnological variety is the result of a policy inaugurated by Catherine II. So long as the southern frontier was pushed forward slowly, the acquired territory was regularly filled up by Russian peasants from the central provinces, who were anxious to obtain more land and more liberty than they enjoyed in their native villages; but during "the glorious age of Catherine" the frontier was pushed forward so rapidly that the old method of spontaneous emigration no longer sufficed to people the annexed territory.

The Empress had recourse, therefore, to organized emigration from foreign countries. Her diplomatic agents in Western Europe were ordered to use all possible efforts to induce artisans and peasants to emigrate to Russia, and special agents were sent to various countries to supplement the efforts of the diplomatists. Thousands accepted the invitation, and were for the most part settled on the land which had been recently the pasture-ground of the nomadic hordes. This policy was adopted by succeeding sovereigns, and has been continued in an intermittent fashion down to the present day; and the consequence of it has been that Southern Russia now contains a variety of races such as is to be found, perhaps, nowhere else in Europe. The official statistics of New Russia alone—that is to say, the provinces of Ekaterinosláf, Tauride, Kherson, and Bessarabia—enumerate the following nationalities: Great Russians, Little Russians, Poles, Servians, Montenegrins, Bulgarians, Moldavians, Germans, English, Swedes, Swiss, French, Italians, Greeks, Armenians, Tartars, Mordwá, Jews and Gypsies. The religions are almost equally numerous. The statistics speak of Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Gregorians, Lutherans, Calvinists, Anglicans, Menonites, Separatists, Pietists, Karaim Jews, Talmudists, Mahometans, and numerous Russian sects, such as the Molokáni and the Skoptsi or Eunuchs. America herself could scarcely show a more motley list in her statistics of population.

It is but fair to state that the above list, though literally correct, does not give a true idea of the actual population. The great body of the inhabitants are Russian and Orthodox, whilst several of the nationalities named are represented by a small number of souls—some of them, such as the French, being found exclusively in the towns. Still, the variety even in the rural population is very great. Once, in the space of three days and using only the most primitive means of conveyance, I visited colonies of Greeks, Germans, Servians, Bulgarians, Montenegrins, and Jews.

Of all the foreign colonists the Germans are by far the most numerous. The object of the Government in inviting them to settle in the country was that they should till the unoccupied land and thereby increase the national wealth, and that they should at the same time exercise a civilizing influence on the Russian peasantry in their vicinity. In this latter respect they have totally failed to fulfil their mission. A Russian village, situated in the

midst of German colonies, shows generally, so far as I could observe, no signs of German influence. Each nationality lives *more majorum*, and holds as little communication as possible with the other. The *muzhik* observes carefully—for he is very curious—the mode of life of his more advanced neighbors, but he never thinks of adopting it. He looks upon Germans almost as beings of a different world—as a wonderfully cunning and ingenious people, who have been endowed by Providence with peculiar qualities not possessed by ordinary Orthodox humanity. To him it seems in the nature of things that Germans should live in large, clean, well-built houses, in the same way as it is in the nature of things that birds should build nests; and as it has probably never occurred to a human being to build a nest for himself and his family, so it never occurs to a Russian peasant to build a house on the German model. Germans are Germans, and Russians are Russians—and there is nothing more to be said on the subject.

This stubbornly conservative spirit of the peasantry who live in the neighborhood of Germans seems to give the lie direct to the oft-repeated and universally-believed assertion that Russians are an imitative people strongly disposed to adopt the manners and customs of any foreigners with whom they may come in contact. The Russian, it is said, changes his nationality as easily as he changes his coat, and derives great satisfaction from wearing some nationality that does not belong to him; but here we have an important fact which appears to prove the contrary.

The truth is that in this matter we must distinguish between the noblesse and the peasantry. The nobles are singularly prone to adopt foreign manners, customs, and institutions; the peasants, on the contrary, are as a rule decidedly conservative. It must not, however, be supposed that this proceeds from a difference of race; the difference is to be explained by the past history of the two classes. Like all other peoples, the Russians are strongly conservative so long as they remain in what may be termed their primitive moral habitat—that is to say, so long as external circumstances do not force them out of their accustomed, traditional groove. The noblesse were long ago violently forced out of their old groove by the reforming Tsars, and since that time they have been so constantly driven hither and thither by foreign influences, that they have never been able to form a new one. Thus they easily enter upon any new path which seems to them profitable or attractive. The

great mass of the people, on the contrary, were too heavy to be thus lifted out of the guiding influence of custom and tradition, and are therefore still animated with a strongly conservative spirit.

In confirmation of this view I may mention two facts which have often attracted my attention. The first of these is that the Molokáni, of whom I have frequently spoken, succumb gradually to German influence; by becoming heretics in religion they free themselves from one of the strongest bonds attaching them to the past, and soon become heretics in things secular. The second fact is that even the Orthodox peasant, when placed by circumstances in some new sphere of activity, readily adopts whatever seems profitable. Take, for example, the peasants who abandon agriculture and embark in industrial enterprises; finding themselves, as it were, in a new world, in which their old traditional notions are totally inapplicable, they have no hesitation in adopting foreign ideas and foreign inventions. And when once they have chosen this new path, they are much more "go-ahead" than the Germans. Freed alike from the trammels of hereditary conceptions and from the prudence which experience generates, they often give a loose rein to their impulsive character, and enter freely on the wildest speculations.

The marked contrast presented by a German colony and a Russian village in close proximity with each other is often used to illustrate the superiority of the Teutonic over the Slavonic race, and in order to make the contrast more striking, the Menonite colonies are generally taken as the representatives of the Germans. Without entering here on the general question, I must say that this method of argumentation is scarcely fair. The Menonites, who formerly lived in the neighborhood of Danzig and emigrated from Prussia in order to escape the military conscription, brought with them to their new home a large store of useful technical knowledge and a considerable amount of capital, and they received a quantity of land very much greater than the Russian peasants possess. Besides this, they enjoyed until very recently several valuable privileges. They were entirely exempted from military service and almost entirely exempted from taxation. Altogether their lines have fallen in very pleasant places. In material and moral well-being they stand as far above the majority of the ordinary German colonists as these latter do above their Russian neighbors. Even in the richest districts of Germany their pros-

perity would attract attention. To compare these rich, privileged, well-educated farmers with the poor, heavily-taxed, uneducated peasantry, and to draw from the comparison conclusions concerning the capabilities of the two races, is a proceeding so palpably absurd that it requires no further comment.

To the wearied traveler who has been living for some time in Russian villages one of these Menonite colonies seems an earthly paradise. In a little hollow, perhaps by the side of a water-course, he suddenly comes on a long row of high-roofed houses half concealed in trees. The trees will be found on closer inspection to be little better than mere saplings; but after a long journey on the bare Steppe, where there is neither tree nor bush of any kind, the foliage, scant as it is, appears singularly inviting. The houses are large, well arranged, and kept in such thoroughly good repair, that they always appear to be newly built. The rooms are plainly furnished, without any pretensions to elegance, but scrupulously clean. Adjoining the house are the stable and byre, which would not disgrace a model farm in Germany or England. In front is a spacious court-yard, which has the appearance of being swept several times a day, and behind there is a garden well stocked with vegetables. Fruit trees and flowers are not very plentiful, for the climate is not favorable to their cultivation. The inhabitants are plain, honest, frugal people, somewhat sluggish of intellect and indifferent to things lying beyond the narrow limits of their own little world, but shrewd enough in all matters which they deem worthy of their attention. If you arrive amongst them as a stranger you may be a little chilled by the welcome you receive, for they are exclusive, reserved, and distrustful, and do not much like to associate with those who do not belong to their own sect; but if you can converse with them in their mother tongue and talk about religious matters in an evangelical tone, you may easily overcome their stiffness and exclusiveness. Altogether such a village cannot be recommended for a lengthened sojourn, for the severe order and symmetry which everywhere prevail would soon prove intolerable to any one having no Dutch blood in his veins; * but

* The Menonites were originally Dutchmen. They emigrated to Prussia some time in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, and have since forgotten their native language, but they have retained among other characteristics their love of order and symmetry.

as a temporary resting-place during a pilgrimage on the Steppe, when the pilgrim is longing for a little cleanliness and comfort, it is very agreeable. Perhaps, therefore, in calling it a little earthly paradise, I ought to have added—for Dutchmen.

The fact that these Menonites and some other German colonies have succeeded in rearing a few sickly trees has suggested to some fertile minds the idea that the prevailing dryness of the climate, which is the chief difficulty with which the agriculturist of that region has to contend, might be to some extent counteracted by arboriculture on a large scale. This scheme, though it has been seriously entertained by one of his Majesty's ministers, must seem eminently impracticable to any one who knows how much labor and money the colonists have expended in creating that agreeable shade which they love to enjoy in their leisure hours. If climate is affected at all by the existence or non-existence of forests—a point on which scientific men do not seem to be entirely agreed—any palpable increase of the rainfall can be produced only by forests of an enormous extent, and it is absurd to imagine that these could be artificially produced in Southern Russia.

After the Menonites and other Germans, the Bulgarian colonists deserve a passing notice. They settled in this region only a few years ago on the land that was left vacant by the exodus of the Nogai Tartars after the Crimean war. Their villages have, therefore, still a bare, unfinished appearance, but the people seem to be already prospering. If I may judge of their condition by a mere flying visit, I should say that in agriculture and domestic civilization they are not very far behind the majority of German colonists. Their houses are indeed small—so small that one of them might almost be put into a single room of a Menonite's house; but there is an air of cleanliness and comfort about them that would do credit to a German housewife. In spite of all this, these Bulgarians were, I could easily perceive, by no means delighted with their new home. The cause of their discontent, so far as I could gather from the few laconic remarks which I extracted from them, seemed to be this. Trusting to the highly-colored descriptions furnished by the emigration agents who had induced them to change the rule of the Sultan for the authority of the Tsar, they came to Europe with the expectation of finding there a fertile and beautiful Promised Land. Instead of a land flowing with milk and honey, they received a tract of bare steppe on which even

water could be obtained only with great difficulty—with no shade to protect them from the heat of summer and nothing to shelter them from the keen northern blasts that often sweep over those open plains. As no adequate arrangements had been made for their reception, they were quartered during the first winter on the German colonists, who, being quite innocent of any Slavophil sympathies, were probably not very hospitable to their uninvited guests. To complete their disappointment, they found that they could not cultivate the vine, and that their mild, fragrant tobacco, which is for them a necessary of life, could not be obtained but at a very high price. So disconsolate were they under this cruel disenchantment that, at the time of my visit, they talked of returning to their old homes in Turkey. Whether their views on this subject have been altered by recent events in their own country I have no means of ascertaining.

As an example of the less prosperous colonists, I may mention the Tartar-speaking Greeks in the neighborhood of Mariúpol, on the northern shore of the Sea of Azof. Their ancestors lived in the Crimea, under the rule of the Tartar Khans, and emigrated to Russia in the time of Catherine II., before Crim Tartary was annexed to the Russian Empire. They have almost entirely forgotten their old language, but have preserved their old faith. In adopting the Tartar language they have adopted something of Tartar indolence and apathy, and the natural consequence is that they are poor and ignorant. They seemed to me to have a most striking resemblance to the so-called Tartars of the Crimea, and from this I am inclined to believe that these latter are, properly speaking, not Tartars at all, but Hellenes who adopted the language and religion of their conquerors.

But of all the colonists of this region the least prosperous are the Jews. The Chosen People are certainly a most intelligent, industrious, frugal race, and in all matters of buying, selling, and bartering they are unrivaled among the nations of the earth, but they have been too long accustomed to town life to be good tillers of the soil. These Jewish colonies were founded as an experiment to see whether the Israelite could be weaned from his traditionary pursuits and transferred to what some economists call the productive section of society. The experiment has failed, and the cause of the failure is not difficult to find. One has merely to look at these men of gaunt visage and shambling gait, with their loop-

holed slippers, and black, threadbare coats reaching down to their ankles, to understand that they are not in their proper sphere. Their houses are in a most dilapidated condition, and their villages remind one of the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the Prophet. A great part of their land is left uncultivated or let to colonists of a different race. What little revenue they have is derived chiefly from trade of a more or less clandestine nature.

As Scandinavia was formerly called *officina gentium*—a workshop in which new nations were made—so we may regard Southern Russia as a workshop in which fragments of old nations are being melted down to form a new, composite whole. It must be confessed, however, that the melting process has as yet scarcely begun.

National peculiarities are not obliterated so rapidly in Russia as in America or in British colonies. In the United States I have often seen Germans who had been but a few years in the country trying hard to be more American than the natives, ludicrously exaggerating American peculiarities of manner, speaking a barbarous jargon which they supposed to be English in preference to their mother tongue, boisterously expressing their admiration of American institutions, and ready to resent as an insult any doubt as to their being genuine citizens of the Great Republic. Among the German colonists in Russia I have never seen anything of this kind. Though their fathers and grandfathers may have been born in the new country they would consider it an insult to be called Russians. They look down upon the Russian peasantry as poor, ignorant, lazy, and dishonest, fear the officials on account of their tyranny and extortion, preserve jealously their own language and customs, rarely speak Russian well—sometimes not at all—and never intermarry with those from whom they are separated by nationality and religion. The Russian influence acts, however, more rapidly on the Slavonic colonists—Servians, Bulgarians, Montenegrins—who profess the Greek Orthodox faith, learn more easily the Russian language which is closely allied to their own, have no consciousness of belonging to a *Culturvolk*, and in general possess a nature much more pliable than the Teutonic.

The Government is at present attempting to accelerate the fusion process by retracting the privileges granted to the colonists and abolishing the peculiar administration under which they were placed. These measures—especially the conscription—may, per-

haps, eventually diminish the extreme exclusiveness of the Germans; the youths, whilst serving in the army, will at least learn the Russian language, and may possibly imbibe something of the Russian spirit. But for the present this new policy has aroused a strong feeling of hostility and greatly intensified the spirit of exclusiveness. In every German colony one may overhear complaints about Russian tyranny, and uncomplimentary remarks about the Russian national character. The Menonites consider themselves specially aggrieved by the so-called reforms. They came to Russia in order to escape military service and with the distinct understanding that they should be exempted from it, and now they are to be forced to act contrary to the religious tenets of their sect. This is the ground of complaint as put forward in the petition addressed to the Government, but they have at the same time another, and perhaps more important, objection to the proposed changes. They feel, as several of them admitted to me, that if the barrier which separates them from the rest of the population were in any way broken down, they could no longer preserve that stern Puritanical discipline which at present constitutes their force. Hence, though the Government was disposed to make important concessions, hundreds of families have already sold their property and emigrated to America, and the exodus still continues. When visiting the Menonite colonies in 1872 and 1873, I was informed by influential members of the brotherhood that at least one-half of the Menonite population would leave the country and seek a new home in the Far West. The movement has naturally re-awakened their religious enthusiasm, which was gradually going to sleep under the influence of continued prosperity. Once more they are reminded by Providence that though they live in the world they are not of it, and that they must always be ready to suffer for their faith.

It is quite possible that under the new system of administration the colonists who profess, in common with the Russians, the Greek Orthodox faith may be rapidly Russianized; but I am convinced that the others will long resist all assimilation. Greek Orthodoxy and Protestant sectarianism are so radically different in spirit that their respective votaries are not likely to intermarry; and without intermarriage it is impossible that the two nationalities should blend together.

As an instance of the ethnological curiosities which the traveler

may stumble upon unawares in this curious region, I may mention a strange acquaintance I made when traveling on the great plain which stretches from the Sea of Azof to the Caspian. One day I accidentally noticed on my traveling map the name "*Shotlándskaya Kolóniya*" (Scottish Colony) near the celebrated baths of Piatigorsk. I was at that moment in Stávropol, a town about eighty miles to the north, and could not gain any satisfactory information as to what this colony was. Some well-informed people assured me that it really was what its name implied, whilst others asserted as confidently that it was simply a small German settlement. To decide the matter I determined to visit the place myself, though it did not lie in my intended route, and I accordingly found myself one morning in the village in question. The first inhabitants whom I encountered were unmistakably German, and they professed to know nothing about the existence of Scotchmen in the locality either at the present or in former times. This was disappointing, and I was about to turn away and drive off, when a young man who proved to be the schoolmaster, came up, and on hearing what I desired, advised me to consult an old Circassian who lived at the end of the village and was well acquainted with local antiquities. On proceeding to the house indicated, I found a venerable old man, with fine regular features of the Circassian type, coal-black sparkling eyes, and a long gray beard that would have done honor to a patriarch. To him I explained briefly, in Russian, the object of my visit, and asked whether he knew of any Scotchmen in the district.

"And why do you wish to know?" he replied, in the same language, fixing me with his keen, sparkling eyes.

"Because I am myself a Scotchman, and hoped to find fellow-countrymen here."

Let the reader imagine my astonishment when, in reply to this, he answered, in genuine broad Scotch, "Od, man, I'm a Scotchman tae! My name is John Abercrombie. Did ye never hear tell o' John Abercrombie, the famous Edinburgh doctor?"

I was fairly puzzled by this extraordinary declaration. Dr. Abercrombie's name was familiar to me as that of a medical practitioner and writer on psychology, but I knew that he was long since dead. When I had recovered a little from my surprise, I ventured to remark to the enigmatical personage before me that,

though his tongue was certainly Scotch, his face was as certainly Circassian.

"Weel, weel," he replied, evidently enjoying my look of mystification, "you're no' far wrang. I'm a Circassian Scotchman!"

This extraordinary admission did not diminish my perplexity, so I begged my new acquaintance to be a little more explicit, and he at once complied with my request. His long story may be told in a few words:—

In the first years of the present century a band of Scotch missionaries came to Russia for the purpose of converting the Circassian tribes, and received from the Emperor Alexander I. a large grant of land in this place, which was then on the frontier of the Empire. Here they founded a mission, and began the work; but they soon discovered that the surrounding population were not idolaters, but Mussulmans, and consequently impervious to Christianity. In this difficulty they fell on the happy idea of buying Circassian children from their parents, and bringing them up as Christians. One of these children, purchased about the year 1806, was a little boy called Teoona. As he had been purchased with money subscribed by Dr. Abercrombie, he had received in baptism that gentleman's name, and he considered himself the foster-son of his benefactor. Here was the explanation of the mystery.

Teoona, *alias* Mr. Abercrombie, was a man of more than average intelligence. Besides his native tongue, he spoke English, German, and Russian perfectly; and he assured me that he knew several other languages equally well. His life had been devoted to missionary work, and especially to translating and printing the Scriptures. He had labored first in Astrakhan, then for four years and a half in Persia—in the service of the Bâle mission—and afterward for six years in Siberia.

The Scottish mission was suppressed by the Emperor Nicholas about the year 1835, and all the missionaries except two returned home. The son of one of these two (Galloway) is the only genuine Scotchman remaining. Of the "Circassian Scotchmen" there are several, most of whom have married Germans. The other inhabitants are German colonists from the province of Sarátov, and German is the language commonly spoken in the village.

After hearing so much about foreign colonists, Tartar invaders,

and Finnish aborigines, the reader may naturally desire to know the numerical strength of this foreign element in comparison with the genuine Russian population. Unfortunately we have no accurate statistical data on this subject, but we may say roughly that of the 61,000,000 inhabitants of European Russia—excluding Finland, Poland, and the Caucasus—rather more than 12,000,000, or one-fifth, are of foreign origin.

According to Obrutchev ("Voénno-Statistícheski Sbórník"), the various races are represented as follows:—

ARYAN RACES—

Lithuanians	..	..	2,343,000	
Poles	..	..	960,000	
Moldavians	..	..	875,000	
Germans	..	..	661,000	
Greeks	..	..	47,000	
Bulgarians	40,000	
Armenians	33,000	
			<hr/> 4,959,000	4,959,000

SEMITIC RACE—

Jews	1,631,000	1,631,000
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TURANIAN RACES—

Finns	3,038,000	
Tartars in the narrower sense			1,312,000	
Bashkirs and cognate tribes			1,037,000	
Kirghis	..	..	146,000	
Kalmuks	..	..	86,000	
			<hr/> 5,619,000	5,619,000

Not included in the above classification

..	..	103,000	103,000
			<hr/> 12,312,000

Thus we see—

The Russians compose	79·89	per cent. of the population.
Other Aryan races	8·11	" " "
Semitic	2·67	" " "
Turanian	9·17	" " "
Various	1·16	" " "

Of the social and political importance of this foreign element we may form some idea by means of the statistics which we pos-

sess regarding the religious confessions. In Russia, religion and nationality are, practically speaking, so closely allied as to be almost identical; and we may be quite sure that those who have become members of the National Church are either already Russified or on the high-road to Russification. Regarding nationality, then, from the social point of view, we find that the foreign element decreases somewhat in bulk.* Of the sixty-one millions composing the population of European Russia in the sense above defined, about nine millions are non-Orthodox. Of these, nearly three millions are Roman Catholics; rather more than two millions are Protestants; about a million and a half are Jews; two millions are Mahometans; and 86,000 are Lamaïsts.

The geographical distribution of these various sects is worthy of attention. In the provinces lying near the western frontier we find the influence of the West in the form of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, and in the eastern provinces we observe Oriental influences in the form of Lamaïsm and Islam. Thus, with regard to religious beliefs, as in many other respects, Russia forms the connecting-link between Europe and Asia.†

* This decrease is accounted for by the fact that the Finns in Russia Proper (3,038,000) are Orthodox.

† Part of this chapter was published in *The Fortnightly Review*, August, 1876.

CHAPTER XXV.

ST. PETERSBURG AND EUROPEAN INFLUENCE.

St. Petersburg and Berlin—Big Houses—Police—The “Lions”—Peter the Great—His Aims and Policy—The German Régime—Nationalist Reaction—French Influence—Consequent Intellectual Sterility—Influence of the Sentimental School—Hostility to Foreign Influences—A New Period of Literary Importation—Secret Societies—The Catastrophe—The Age of Nicholas—A Terrible War on Parnassus—Decline of Romanticism and Transcendentalism—Gógol—The Revolutionary Agitation of 1848—New Reaction—Conclusion.

FROM whatever side the traveler approaches St. Petersburg, unless he goes thither by sea, he must traverse several hundred miles of forest and morass, presenting few traces of human habitation or agriculture. This fact adds powerfully to the first impression which the city makes on his mind. In the midst of a waste howling wilderness, he suddenly comes on a magnificent artificial oasis.

Of all the great European cities the one which most resembles the capital of the Tsars is Berlin. Both are built on perfectly level ground; both have wide, regularly-arranged, badly-paved streets; in both there is a general look of stiffness and symmetry which suggests military discipline and German bureaucracy. But there is at least one profound difference. Though Berlin is said by geographers to be built on the Spree, we might live a long time in the city without ever noticing the sluggish, dirty little stream on which the name of a river has been undeservedly conferred. St. Petersburg, on the contrary, is built on a magnificent river, which forms the main feature of the place. By its breadth, and by the enormous volume of its clear blue cold water, the Neva is certainly one of the noblest rivers in Europe. A few miles before reaching the Gulf of Finland it breaks up into several streams and forms a delta. It is here that St. Petersburg stands. The prin-

cipal part of the town is built on the southern bank ; the remainder is scattered over the northern bank and the islands. The chief of these is Basil Island, or Vassiliostrof, connected with the southern bank by a long stone bridge, remarkable for the beauty of its outline. This is the only great stone bridge of which the city can boast,* but there are numerous wooden ones—some supported by piles, and others by boats like the well-known floating bridges on the Rhine—which connect the islands with each other and with the mainland. At many intermediate points the communication is kept up in summer by picturesque, little two-oared ferry-boats, built, it is said, on a model designed by Peter the Great. Some of the more distant parts of the town may be conveniently reached by means of the active little steam-launches, which dart about, and add to the animation of the scene. In winter these ferry-boats and launches disappear, and the bridges lose much of their importance, for the river is covered throughout its whole extent by a thick firm layer of ice, strong enough to support the heaviest burdens. Then disappear, too, the rattling, jolting little *droskies*—a vehicle which stands midway between a cab and an instrument of torture—and are replaced by the sledges, which glide along smoothly and noiselessly like a boat in calm water.

The main stream, or “Big Neva,” spanned by the stone bridge and by three bridges of boats, flows between the city properly so called and Vassiliostrof, and is kept within proper bounds by quays and embankments solidly built and faced with massive blocks of red granite. On the southern side the embankment is used as a street or promenade. The quays of Vassiliostrof, on the contrary, are employed for commercial purposes, and are always lined during the summer months by a goodly array of shipping. At the eastern extremity of the island stand the Custom-house and the Exchange, and here the foreign merchants, who monopolize the export and import trade, most do congregate. The quarter is not, however, exclusively mercantile, for it contains also the Academy of Science, the University, and the Academy of the Fine Arts. On the neighboring island, higher up the river, stands the fortress, a picturesque structure, used as the burying-place of the Imperial family and as a State prison. On the opposite bank stand the Imperial palace, the Admiralty, the Senate,

* A second is now in course of construction.

and, further down, the naval dockyards; and, high over all, towers the majestic gilded dome of St. Isaac's.

Like the river, everything in St. Petersburg is on a colossal scale. The streets, the squares, the palaces, the public buildings, the churches, whatever may be their defects, have at least the attribute of greatness, and seem to have been designed for the countless generations to come, rather than for the practical wants of the present inhabitants. In this respect the city well represents the Empire of which it is the capital. Even the private houses are built in enormous blocks, many of them containing more than a score of separate apartments.

This custom of building big houses has rendered possible a peculiar and effective system of police organization. Each house has a *dvornik*, or porter, who is a servant of the proprietor and at the same time a police agent. He has to sweep, and in summer to water, the street in front of the house, and to see that all the inmates observe scrupulously the passport regulations. At night he has to remain outside in the street and act as watchman. The fact that these men commonly lie down and go to sleep during the long winter nights, when the thermometer may sink to thirty degrees below zero, and that they are rarely if ever frozen to death, constitutes a brilliant proof of the Russian's wonderful capacity for resisting extreme cold. Formerly, it is said, these watchmen often aided the police in waylaying and robbing benighted citizens; but all such practices have become things of the past, and the police of St. Petersburg may now challenge comparison with those of the other European capitals.

St. Petersburg has, of course, its "lions," which every tourist is expected to visit and admire. There is, for instance, St. Isaac's Cathedral, an enormous building in Renaissance style, with gilded dome and gigantic monolithic pillars of red granite. The general effect of the exterior, especially when covered with a layer of sparkling hoar-frost, is very fine; but the interior has been spoiled by rich, gaudy decorations, which might supply admirable illustrations for a sermon on pretentious vulgarity and bad taste. A much less successful architectural effort is the Kazan Church, which is often praised by Russians as the work of a native artist, but which is in reality a striking illustration of that spirit of thoughtless imitation which is too often to be found in Russian institutions. The gigantic, semicircular colonnade, suggested by

that of St. Peter's at Rome, is so utterly out of proportion with the rest of the structure, that it completely hides the body of the church, while the dome peeps over the formidable barrier like a culprit condemned to imprisonment for life and apathetically resigned to his fate. Then there is the Winter Palace, which finds favor in the eyes of those who believe in the transcendent genius of Rastrelli, but which is completely wanting in the stern, massive grandeur which the name suggests. Some of the minor palaces are much more in keeping with the nature of the climate, but they present nothing that can be called a Russian style of architecture.* There is a Russian style, but it is suitable only for wooden buildings. In their stone buildings the Russians have, like the other Northern nations, borrowed largely from the countries of Southern Europe without considering the difference of climate. What the Petersburgians may be justly proud of is the general grandiose appearance of their city, and not the beauty of particular edifices.

Of statues and other monuments there is a goodly quantity, displaying all degrees of merit, from the equestrian statue of Peter the Great, which is really a work of art, to the statues and busts in the Summer Garden, which are simply artistic monstrosities. Pictures, too, there are in abundance. The Hermitage, for instance, contains a really magnificent collection of the Dutch school, and a large number of works attributed to Italian and Spanish old masters—all more or less genuine. But I need not trespass on the domain of the art critic, nor need I weary the reader with descriptions of what has already been described in the guide-books. In St. Petersburg, as elsewhere, sight-seeing is a weariness of the flesh; and the tourist may employ his time much more agreeably in sauntering about the streets and bazaars, especially if it be in winter time, when St. Petersburg wears its national costume.

There is, however, one "sight" which must have a deep interest for those who are sensitive to the influence of historical associations—I mean the little wooden house in which Peter the Great lived whilst his future capital was being built. In its style and arrangement it looks more like the hut of a navvy than the resi-

* The principal buildings of St. Petersburg have been described by Mr. Fergusson in his great work on the "History of Architecture."

dence of a Tsar, but it was quite in keeping with the character of the illustrious man who occupied it. Peter could and did occasionally work like a navvy without feeling that his Imperial dignity was thereby diminished. When he determined to build a new capital on a Finnish marsh, inhabited chiefly by wildfowl, he did not content himself with exercising his autocratic power in a comfortable arm-chair. Like the old Greek gods, he went down from his Olympus, and took his place in the ranks of ordinary mortals, superintending the work with his own eyes, and taking part in it with his own hands. If he was as arbitrary and oppressive as any of the pyramid-building Pharaohs, he could at least say in self-justification that he did not spare himself any more than his people, but exposed himself freely to the discomforts and dangers under which thousands of his fellow-laborers succumbed.

In reading the account of Peter's life, written in part by his own pen, we can easily understand how the piously Conservative section of his subjects failed to recognize in him the legitimate successor of the orthodox Tsars. The old Tsars had been men of grave, pompous demeanor, and deeply imbued with the consciousness of their semi-religious dignity. Living habitually in Moscow or its immediate neighborhood, they spent their time in attending long religious services, in consulting with their Boyárs, in being present at ceremonious hunting-parties, in visiting the monasteries, and in holding edifying conversations with ecclesiastical dignitaries or revered ascetics. If they undertook a journey, it was probably to make a pilgrimage to some holy shrine; and, whether in Moscow or elsewhere, they were always protected from contact with ordinary humanity by a formidable barricade of court ceremonial. In short, they combined the characters of a Christian monk and an Oriental potentate.

Peter was a man of an entirely different stamp, and played in the calm, dignified, orthodox, ceremonial world of Moscow the part of the bull in the china shop, outraging ruthlessly and wantonly all the time-honored traditional conceptions of propriety and etiquette. Utterly regardless of public opinion and popular prejudices, he swept away the old formalities, avoided ceremonies of all kinds, scoffed at ancient usage, preferred foreign secular books to edifying conversations, chose profane heretics as his boon companions, traveled in foreign countries, dressed in heretical costume, defaced the image of God and put his soul in jeopardy by shaving

off his beard, compelled his nobles to dress and shave like himself, rushed about the Empire as if goaded on by the demon of unrest, employed his sacred hands in carpentering and other menial occupations, took part openly in the uproarious orgies of his foreign soldiery, and, in short, did everything that "the Lord's anointed" might reasonably be expected not to do. No wonder the Moscovites were scandalized by his conduct, and that some of them suspected he was not the Tsar at all, but Antichrist in disguise. And no wonder he felt the atmosphere of Moscow oppressive, and preferred living in the new capital which he had himself created.

His avowed object in building St. Petersburg was to have "a window by which the Russians might look into civilized Europe;" and well has the city fulfilled its purpose. From its foundation may be dated the European period of Russian history. Before Peter's time Russia belonged to Asia rather than to Europe, and was doubtless regarded by Englishmen and Frenchmen pretty much as we nowadays regard Bokhara or Kashgar; since that time she has formed an integral part of the European political system, and her intellectual history has been but a reflection of the intellectual history of Western Europe, modified and colored by national character and by peculiar local conditions.

When we speak of the intellectual history of a nation we generally mean in reality the intellectual history of the upper classes. With regard to Russia, more perhaps than with regard to any other country, this distinction must always carefully be borne in mind. Peter succeeded in forcing European civilization on the nobles, but the people remained unaffected. Thus the nation has, as it were, cleft in two, and with each succeeding generation the cleft was widened. Whilst the masses clung obstinately to their time-honored customs and beliefs, the nobles came to look on the objects of popular veneration as the relics of a barbarous past, of which a civilized nation ought to be ashamed.

The intellectual movement inaugurated by Peter had a purely practical character. He was himself a thorough utilitarian, and perceived clearly that what his people needed was not theological or philosophical enlightenment, but plain practical knowledge suitable for the requirements of everyday life. He wanted neither theologians nor philosophers, but military and naval officers, administrators, artisans, miners, manufacturers, and merchants,

and for this purpose he introduced secular technical education. For the young generation primary schools were founded, and for more advanced pupils the best foreign works on fortification, architecture, navigation, metallurgy, engineering, and cognate subjects, were translated into the native tongue. Scientific men and cunning artificers were brought into the country, and young Russians were sent abroad to learn foreign languages and the useful arts. In a word, everything was done that seemed likely to raise the Russians to the level of material well-being already attained by the more advanced nations.

We have here an important peculiarity in the intellectual development of Russia. In Western Europe the modern scientific spirit, being the natural offspring of numerous concomitant historical causes, was born in the natural way, and Society had, consequently, before giving birth to it, to endure the pains of pregnancy and the throes of prolonged labor. In Russia, on the contrary, this spirit appeared suddenly as an adult foreigner, adapted by a despotic paterfamilias. Thus Russia made the transition from medieval to modern times without any violent struggle between the old and the new conceptions, such as had taken place in the West. The Church, effectually restrained from all active opposition by the Imperial power, preserved unmodified her ancient beliefs, whilst the nobles, casting their traditional conceptions and beliefs to the winds, marched forward unfettered on that path which their fathers and grandfathers had regarded as the direct road to perdition.

During the first part of Peter's reign Russia was not subjected to the exclusive influence of any one particular country. Thoroughly cosmopolitan in his sympathies, the great reformer was ready to borrow from any foreign nation—German, Dutch, Danish, or French—whatever seemed to him to suit his purpose. But soon the geographical proximity to Germany, the annexation of the Baltic Provinces in which the civilization was German, and intermarriages between the Imperial family and various German dynasties, gave to German influence a decided preponderance. When the Empress Anne, Peter's niece, who had been Duchess of Courland, intrusted the whole administration of the country to her favorite Biron, the German influence became almost exclusive, and the court, the official world, and the schools were Germanized.

The harsh, cruel, tyrannical rule of Biron produced a strong reaction, ending in a revolution, which raised to the throne the Princess Elizabeth, Peter's unmarried daughter, who had lived in retirement and neglect during the German régime. She was expected to rid the country of foreigners, and she did what she could to fulfill the expectations that were entertained of her. With loud protestations of patriotic feelings, she removed the Germans from all important posts, demanded that in future the members of the Academy should be chosen from among born Russians, and gave orders that the Russian youth should be carefully prepared for all kinds of official activity.

This attempt to throw off the German bondage did not lead to intellectual independence. During Peter's violent reforms Russia had ruthlessly thrown away her own historic past with whatever germs it contained, and now she possessed none of the elements of a genuine national culture. She was in the position of a fugitive who has escaped from slavery, and, finding himself in danger of starvation, looks out for a new master. The upper classes, who had acquired a taste for foreign civilization, no sooner threw off everything German than they sought some other civilization to put in its place. And they could not long hesitate in making a choice, for at that time all who thought of culture and refinement turned their eyes to Paris and Versailles. All that was most brilliant and refined was to be found at the Court of the French kings, under whose patronage the art and literature of the Renaissance had attained their highest development. Even Germany, which had resisted the ambitious designs of Louis XIV., imitated the manners of his Court. Every petty German potentate strove to ape the pomp and dignity of the Grand Monarque; and the courtiers, affecting to look on everything German as rude and barbarous, adopted French fashions, and spoke a hybrid jargon which they considered much more elegant than the plain mother tongue. In a word, Gallomania had become the prevailing social epidemic of the time, and it could not fail to attack severely and metamorphose completely such a class as the Russian noblesse, which possessed few stubborn, deep-rooted national convictions.

At first the French influence was manifested chiefly in external forms—that is to say, in dress, manners, language, and upholstery—but gradually, and very rapidly after the accession of Catherine

II., the friend of Voltaire and the Encyclopædists, it sunk deeper. Every noble who had pretensions to being "civilized" learned to speak French fluently, and gained some superficial acquaintance with French literature. The tragedies of Corneille and Racine and the comedies of Molière were played regularly at the Court theater in presence of the Empress, and awakened a real or affected enthusiasm among the audience. For those who preferred reading in their native language, numerous translations were published, a simple list of which would fill several pages. Among them we find not only Voltaire, Rousseau, Lesage, Marmontel, and other favorite French authors, but also all the masterpieces of European literature, ancient and modern, which at that time enjoyed a high reputation in the French literary world—Homer and Demosthenes, Cicero and Virgil, Ariosto and Camoens, Milton and Locke, Sterne and Fielding.

It is related of Byron that he never wrote a description whilst the scene was actually before him; and this fact points to an important psychological principle. The human mind, so long as it is compelled to strain the receptive faculties, cannot engage in that "poetic" activity—to use the term in its Greek sense—which is commonly called "original creation." And as with individuals, so with nations. By accepting in a lump a foreign culture a nation inevitably condemns itself for a time to intellectual sterility. So long as it is occupied in receiving and assimilating a flood of new ideas, unfamiliar conceptions, and foreign modes of thought, it will produce nothing original, and the result of its highest efforts will be merely successful imitation. We need not be surprised therefore to find that the Russians, in becoming acquainted with foreign literature, became imitators and plagiarists. In this kind of work their natural pliancy of mind and powerful histrionic talent made them wonderfully successful. Odes, pseudo-classical tragedies, satirical comedies, epic poems, elegies, and all the other recognized forms of poetical composition, appeared in great profusion, and many of the writers acquired a remarkable command over their native language, which had hitherto been regarded as uncouth and barbarous. But in all this mass of imitative literature, which has since fallen into well-merited oblivion, there are very few traces of genuine originality. To obtain the title of the Russian Racine, the Russian Lafontaine, the Russian Pindar, or

the Russian Homer, was at that time the highest aim of Russian literary ambition.

Together with the fashionable literature the Russian educated classes adopted something of the fashionable philosophy. They were peculiarly unfitted to resist that hurricane of "enlightenment" which swept over Europe during the latter half of last century, first breaking or uprooting the received philosophical systems, theological conceptions, and scientific theories, and then shaking to their foundations the existing political and social institutions. The Russian noblesse had neither the traditional conservative spirit, nor the firm, well-reasoned, logical beliefs which in England and Germany formed a powerful barrier against the spread of French influence. They had been too recently metamorphosed, and were too eager to acquire a foreign civilization, to have even the germs of a conservative spirit. The rapidity and violence with which Peter's reforms had been effected, together with the peculiar spirit of the Greek Orthodoxy and the low intellectual level of the clergy, had prevented theology from associating itself with the new order of things. The upper classes had become estranged from the beliefs of their forefathers without acquiring other beliefs to supply the place of those which had been lost. The old religious conceptions were inseparably interwoven with what was recognized as antiquated and barbarous, whilst the new philosophical ideas were associated with all that was modern and civilized. Besides this, the sovereign who at the time ruled the country and enjoyed the unbounded admiration of the upper classes, openly professed allegiance to the new philosophy, and sought the advice and friendship of its High Priests. If we bear in mind these facts we shall not be surprised to find among the Russian nobles of that time a considerable number of so-called "Voltaireans" and numerous unquestioning believers in the infallibility of the *Encyclopédie*. What is a little more surprising is, that the new philosophy sometimes found its way into the ecclesiastical seminaries. The famous Speranski relates that in the seminary of St. Petersburg, one of his professors, when not in a state of intoxication, was in the habit of preaching the doctrines of Voltaire and Diderot!

The rise of the sentimental school in Western Europe produced an important change in Russian literature, by undermining the inordinate admiration for the French pseudo-classical school.

Florian, Richardson, Sterne, Rousseau, and Bernardin de St. Pierre found first translators, and then imitators, and soon the loud-sounding declamation and wordy ecstatic despair of the stage heroes were drowned in the deep-drawn sighs and plaintive wailings of amorous swains and peasant-maids forsaken. The mania seems to have been in Russia even more severe than in the countries where it originated. Full-grown, bearded men wept because they had not been born in peaceful primitive times, "when all men were shepherds and brothers." Hundreds of sighing youths and maidens visited the scenes described by the sentimental writers, and wandered by the rivers and ponds in which despairing heroines had drowned themselves. People talked, wrote, and meditated about "the sympathy of hearts created for each other," "the soft communion of sympathetic souls," and much more of the same kind. Sentimental journeys became a favorite amusement, and formed the subject of very popular books, containing maudlin absurdities likely to produce nowadays mirth rather than tears. One traveler, for instance, throws himself on his knees before an old oak and makes a speech to it; another weeps daily on the grave of a favorite dog, and constantly longs to marry a peasant-girl; a third talks love to the moon, sends kisses to the stars, and wishes to press the heavenly orbs to his bosom! For a time the public would read nothing but absurd productions of this sort, and Karamzín, the great literary authority of the time, expressly declared that the true function of Art was "to disseminate agreeable impressions in the region of the sentimental."

The love of French philosophy vanished as suddenly as the inordinate admiration of the French pseudo-classical literature. When the great Revolution broke out in Paris, the fashionable philosophic literature in St. Petersburg disappeared. Men who talked about political freedom and the rights of man, without thinking for a moment of limiting the autocratic power or of emancipating their serfs, were naturally surprised and frightened on discovering what the liberal principles could effect when applied to real life. Horrified by the awful scenes of the Terror, they hastened to divest themselves of the principles which led to such results, and sunk into a kind of optimistic conservatism that harmonized well with the virtuous sentimentalism in vogue. In this the Empress herself gave the example. The Imperial disciple

and friend of the Encyclopædists became in the last years of her reign a decided *réactionnaire*.

During the Napoleonic wars, when the patriotic feelings were excited, there was a violent hostility to foreign intellectual influence ; and feeble intermittent attempts were made to throw off the intellectual bondage. The invasion of the country in 1812 by the Grande Armée, and the burning of Moscow, added abundant fuel to this patriotic fire. For some time any one who ventured to express even a moderate admiration for French culture incurred the risk of being stigmatized as a traitor to his country and a renegade to the national faith. But this patriotic fanaticism soon evaporated, and the exaggerations of the ultra-national party became the object of satire and parody. When the political danger was past, and people resumed their ordinary occupations, those who loved foreign literature returned to their old favorites—or, as the ultra-patriots called it, to their “ wallowing in the mire ”—simply because the native literature did not supply them with what they desired. “ We are quite ready,” they said to their up-braiders, “ to admire your great works as soon as they appear, but in the meantime please allow us to enjoy what we possess.” Thus the patriotic opposition gradually ceased, and a new period of unrestricted intellectual importation began.

The intellectual merchandise now brought into the country was very different from that which had been imported in the time of Catherine. The French Revolution, the Napoleonic domination, the patriotic wars, the restoration of the Bourbons, and the other great events of that memorable epoch, had in the interval produced profound changes in the intellectual as well as the political condition of Western Europe. During the Napoleonic wars Russia had become closely associated with Germany ; and now the peculiar intellectual fermentation which was going on among the German educated classes was reflected in the society of St. Petersburg. It did not appear, indeed, in the printed literature, for the Press-censure had been recently organized on the principles laid down by Metternich, but it was none the less violent on that account. Whilst the periodicals were filled with commonplace meditations on youth, spring, the love of art, and similar innocent topics, the young generation was discussing in the salons all the burning questions which Metternich and his adherents were endeavoring to extinguish.

These discussions, if discussions they might be called, were not of a very serious kind. They were rather *causeries*, carried on by men of fashion, who spent a little of their leisure time in dipping into new books, and extracting therefrom enough to form the subject of a conversation. In true dilettante style these fashionable young philosophers culled from the newest books the newest thoughts and theories, and retailed them in the salon or the ball-room. And they were always sure to find attentive listeners. The more astounding the idea or dogma, the more likely was it to be favorably received. No matter whether it came from the Rationalists, the Mystics, the Freemasons, or the Methodists, it was certain to find favor, provided it was novel and presented in an elegant form. The eclectic minds of that curious time could derive equal satisfaction from the brilliant discourses of the reactionary jesuitical De Maistre, the revolutionary odes of Púshkin, and the mystical ravings of Frau von Krüdener. For the majority the vague theosophic doctrines and the projects for a spiritual union of governments and peoples, had perhaps the greatest charm, being specially commended by the fact that they enjoyed the protection and sympathy of the Emperor. Pious souls discovered in the mystical lucubrations of Jung-Stilling and Baader the final solution of all existing difficulties, political, social, and philosophical. Men of less dreamy temperament put their faith in political economy and constitutional theories, and sought a foundation for their favorite schemes in the past history of the country and in the supposed fundamental peculiarities of the national character. Like the young German democrats, who were then talking enthusiastically about Teutons, Cheruskers, Skalds, the shade of Arminius, and the heroes of the Niebelungen, these young Russian *savants* recognized in early Russian history—when reconstructed according to their own fancy—lofty political ideals, and dreamed of resuscitating the ancient institutions in all their pristine imaginary splendor.

Each age has its peculiar social and political panaceas. One generation puts its trust in religion, another in philanthropy, a third in written constitutions, a fourth in universal suffrage, a fifth in popular education. In the Epoch of the Restoration, as it is called, the favorite panacea was secret political association. Very soon after the overthrow of Napoleon, the peoples who had risen in arms to obtain political independence discovered that they

had merely changed masters. The Princes reconstructed Europe according to their own convenience, without paying much attention to patriotic aspirations, and forgot their promises of liberal institutions as soon as they were again firmly seated on their thrones. This was naturally for many a bitter deception. The young generation, excluded from all share in political life and gagged by the stringent police supervision, sought to realize its political aspirations by means of secret societies, resembling more or less the masonic brotherhoods. There were the *Burschenschaften* in Germany; the Union, and the "*Aide toi et le ciel t'aidera*," in France; the Order of the Hammer in Spain; the *Carbonari* in Italy; and the *Hetairia* in Greece. In Russia the young nobles followed the prevailing fashion. Secret societies were formed, and in December, 1825, an attempt was made to raise a military insurrection in St. Petersburg, for the purpose of deposing the Imperial family and proclaiming a republic; but the attempt failed, and the vague Utopian dreams of the romantic would-be reformers were swept away by grapeshot.

This "December catastrophe," still vividly remembered, was for the society of St. Petersburg like the giving way of the floor in a crowded ball-room. But a moment before, all had been animated, careless, and happy; now consternation was depicted on every face. The salons that but yesterday had been ringing with lively discussions on morals, æsthetics, politics, and theology, were now silent and deserted. Many of those who had been wont to lead the *causeries* had been removed to the cells of the fortress, and those who had not been arrested trembled for themselves or their friends; for nearly all had of late dabbled more or less in the theory and practice of revolution. The announcement that five of the conspirators had been condemned to the gallows and the others sentenced to transportation did not tend to calm the consternation. Society was like a discomfited child, who, amidst the delight and exultation of letting off fireworks, has had his fingers severely burnt.

The sentimental, wavering Alexander I. had been succeeded by his stern, energetic brother Nicholas, and the command went forth that there should be no more fireworks, no more dilettante philosophizing or political aspirations. There was, however, little need for such an order. Society had been, for the moment at least, effectually cured of all tendencies to political dreaming. It had

discovered, to its astonishment and dismay, that these new ideas, which were to bring temporal salvation to humanity, and to make all men happy, virtuous, refined, and poetical, led in reality to exile and the scaffold ! The pleasant dream was at an end, and the fashionable world, giving up its former habits, took to harmless occupations—card-playing, dissipation, and the reading of French light literature. “The French quadrille,” as a writer of the time tersely expresses it, “has taken the place of Adam Smith.”

When the storm had passed, the life of the salons began anew, but it was very different from what it had been. There was no longer any talk about political economy, theology, popular education, administrative abuses, social and political reforms. Everything that had any relation to politics in the wider sense of the term was by tacit consent avoided. Discussions there were as of old, but they were now confined to literary topics, theories of art, and similar innocent subjects.

This indifference or positive repugnance to philosophy and political science, strengthened and prolonged by the repressive system of administration adopted by Nicholas, was of course fatal to the many-sided intellectual activity which had flourished during the preceding reign, but it was by no means unfavorable to the cultivation of imaginative literature. On the contrary, by excluding those practical interests which tend to disturb artistic production and to engross the attention of the public, it fostered what was called in the phraseology of that time “the pure-hearted worship of the Muses.” We need not, therefore, be surprised to find that the reign of Nicholas, which is commonly and not altogether unjustly described as an epoch of social and intellectual stagnation, may be called in a certain sense the Golden Age of Russian literature.

Already in the preceding reign the struggle between the Classical and the Romantic school—between the adherents of traditional æsthetic principles and the partisans of untrammelled poetic inspiration—which was being carried on in Western Europe, was reflected in Russia. A group of young men belonging to the aristocratic society of St. Petersburg embraced with enthusiasm the new doctrines, and declared war against “classicism,” under which term they understood all that was antiquated, dry, and pedantic. Discarding the stately, lumbering, unwieldy periods

which had hitherto been in fashion, they wrote a light, elastic, vigorous style, and formed a literary society for the express purpose of ridiculing the most approved classical writers. The new principles found many adherents, and the new style many admirers, but this only intensified the hostility of the literary conservatives. The staid, respectable leaders of the old school, who had all their lives kept the fear of Boileau before their eyes and considered his precepts as the infallible utterances of æsthetic wisdom, thundered against the impious innovations as unmistakable symptoms of literary decline and moral degeneracy—representing the boisterous young iconoclasts as dissipated Don Juans and dangerous freethinkers.

Thus for some time in Russia, as in Western Europe, “a terrible war raged on Parnassus.” At first the Government frowned at the innovators, on account of certain revolutionary odes which one of their number had written; but when the Romantic Muse, having turned away from the present as essentially prosaic, went back into the distant past and soared into the region of sublime abstractions, the most keen-eyed Press-censors found no reason to condemn her worship, and the authorities placed almost no restrictions on free poetic inspiration. Romantic poetry acquired the protection of the Government and the patronage of the Court, and the names of Zhukófski, Púshkin, and Lérmontof—the three chief representatives of the Russian Romantic school—became household words in all ranks of the educated classes.

These three great luminaries of the literary world were of course attended by a host of satellites of various magnitudes, who did all in their power to refute the Romantic principles by *reductiones ad absurdum*. Endowed for the most part with considerable facility of composition, the poetasters poured forth their feelings with torrential recklessness, demanding freedom for their inspiration, and cursing the age that fettered them with its prosaic cares, its cold reason, and its dry science. At the same time the dramatists and novelists created heroes of immaculate character and angelic purity, endowed with all the cardinal virtues in the superlative degree; and, as a contrast to these, terrible Satanic personages with savage passions, gleaming daggers, deadly poisons, and all manner of aimless melodramatic villainy. These stilted productions, interspersed with light satirical essays, historical

sketches, literary criticism, and amusing anecdotes, formed the contents of the periodical literature, and completely satisfied the wants of the reading public. Almost no one at that time took any interest in public affairs or foreign politics. The acts of the Government which were watched most attentively were the promotions in the service and the conferring of decorations. The publication of a new tale by Zagóskin or Marlínski—two writers now well-nigh forgotten—seemed of much greater importance than any amount of legislation, and such events as the French Revolution of 1830 paled before the publication of a new poem by Púshkin.

The Transcendental philosophy, which in Germany went hand in hand with the Romantic literature, found likewise a faint reflection in Russia. A number of young professors and students in Moscow, who had become ardent admirers of German literature, passed from the works of Schiller, Goethe, and Hoffmann, to the writings of Schelling and Hegel. Trained in the Romantic school, these young philosophers found at first a special charm in Schelling's mystical system, teeming with hazy poetical metaphors, and presenting a misty grandiose picture of the universe; but gradually they felt the want of some logical basis for their speculations, and Hegel became their favorite. Gallantly they struggled with the uncouth terminology and epigrammatic paradoxes of the great thinker, and strove to force their way through the intricate mazes of his logical formulæ. With all the ardor of neophytes they looked at every phenomenon—even the most trivial incident of common life—from the philosophical point of view, talked day and night about principles, ideas, subjectivity, *Weltauffassung*, and similar abstract entities, and habitually attacked the "hydra of unphilosophy" by analyzing the phenomena presented and relegating the ingredient elements to the recognized categories. In ordinary life they were men of quiet, grave, contemplative demeanor, but their faces could flush and their blood boil when they discussed the all-important question, whether it is possible to pass logically from Pure Being through Nonentity to the conception of Development and Definite Existence!

We know how in Western Europe Romanticism and Transcendentalism, in their various forms, sunk into oblivion, and were replaced by a literature which had a closer connection with

ordinary prosaic wants and plain everyday life. The educated public became weary of the Romantic writers, who were always "sighing like a furnace," delighting in solitude, cold eternity, and moonshine, deluging the world with their heart-gushings, and calling on the heavens and the earth to stand aghast at their Promethean agonizing or their Wertherean despair. Healthy human nature revolted against the poetical enthusiasts, who had lost the faculty of seeing things in their natural light, and who constantly indulged in that morbid self-analysis which is fatal to genuine feeling and vigorous action. And in this healthy reaction the philosophers fared no better than the poets, with whom indeed they had much in common. Shutting their eyes to the visible world around them, they had busied themselves with burrowing in the mysterious depths of Absolute Being, grappling with the *ego* and the *non-ego*, constructing the great world, visible and invisible, out of their own puny internal self-consciousness, endeavoring to appropriate all departments of human thought, and imparting to every subject they touched the dryness and rigidity of an algebraical formula. Gradually men with real human sympathies began to perceive that from all this philosophical turmoil little real advantage was to be derived. It became only too evident that the philosophers were perfectly reconciled with all the evil in the world, provided it did not contradict their theories; that they were men of the same type as the physician in Molière's comedy, whose chief care was that his patients should *die selon les ordonnances de la médecine*.

In Russia the reaction first appeared in the æsthetic literature. Its first influential representative was Gógol (b. 1808, d. 1852), who may be called, in a certain sense, the Russian Dickens. A minute comparison of those two great humorists would perhaps show as many points of contrast as of similarity, but there is a strong superficial resemblance between them. They both possessed an inexhaustible supply of broad humor and an imagination of marvelous vividness. Both had the power of seeing the ridiculous side of common things, and the talent of producing caricatures that had a wonderful semblance of reality. A little calm reflection would suffice to show that the characters presented are for the most part psychological impossibilities—one-sided types rather than living human beings; but on first making their acquaintance we are so struck with one or two life-like character-

istics and various little details dexterously introduced, and at the same time we are so carried away by the overflowing fun of the narrative, that we have neither time nor inclination to use our critical faculties. In a very short time Gógol's fame spread throughout the length and breadth of the Empire, and many of his characters became as familiar to his countrymen as Sam Weller and Mrs. Gamp are to us. His descriptions were so graphic—so like the world which everybody knew! The characters seemed to be old acquaintances hit off to the life; and readers reveled in that peculiar pleasure which most of us derive from seeing our friends successfully mimicked. Even the Iron Tsar could not resist the fun and humor of "The Inspector" (Revizór), and not only laughed heartily but also protected the author against the tyranny of the literary censors, who considered that the piece was not written in a sufficiently "well-intentioned" tone. In a word, the reading public laughed as it had never laughed before, and this wholesome genuine merriment did much to destroy the morbid appetite for Byronic heroes and Romantic affectation.

The Romantic Muse did not at once abdicate, but with the spread of Gógol's popularity her reign was practically at an end. In vain some of the conservative critics decried the new favorite as talentless, prosaic, and vulgar. The public were not to be robbed of their amusement for the sake of any abstract æsthetic considerations; and young authors, taking Gógol for their model, chose their subjects from real life, and endeavored to delineate with minute truthfulness.

This new intellectual movement was at first purely literary, and affected merely the manner of writing novels, tales, and poems. The critics who had previously demanded beauty of form and elegance of expression now demanded accuracy of description, condemned the aspirations towards so-called high art, and praised loudly those who produced the best literary photographs. But authors and critics did not long remain on this purely æsthetic standpoint. The authors, in describing reality, began to indicate moral approval and condemnation, and the critics began to pass from the criticism of the representations to the criticism of the realities represented. A poem or a tale was often used as a peg on which to hang a moral lecture, and the fictitious characters were soundly rated for their sins of omission and commission.

Much was said about the defense of the oppressed, female emancipation, honor and humanitarianism ; and ridicule was unsparingly launched against all forms of ignorance, apathy, and the spirit of routine. The ordinary refrain was that the public ought now to discard what was formerly regarded as poetical and sublime, and to occupy itself with practical concerns—with the real wants of social life. The moral theory previously in fashion was a special object of attack. The moralists had been teaching that moral perfection was to be attained by the study of philosophy and the cultivation of the æsthetic faculties. The leaders of the new movement, on the contrary, adopted the theory that vice and crime do not proceed from any inherent defects in human nature, but from external circumstances—from unreasonable artificial obstacles which unnecessarily hinder the free and complete satisfaction of our instincts and natural desires. From these premises the readers could easily draw for themselves the inevitable conclusion that moral progress was to be made, not by modifying human nature, but by transforming the social organization in such a way that the instincts and natural desires should find free scope and unrestricted satisfaction.

This change in the spirit of the literature was, like all the changes which I have already described, the result of foreign influence. There was at that time in France a wide-spread conviction, formed from the experience of half a century, that human felicity was not to be attained by political revolutions, and that true progress could be made only by undertaking radical reforms in the existing *social* organization. This conviction found expression not only in the writings of the regular philosophers, which were little read, but also in the popular literature, under the form of complaints against the injustice of existing social arrangements, and vague hopes of a social regeneration. Works of this kind had found their way to St. Petersburg and Moscow, and some of the leading literary men who read them—men who had experienced social injustice in their own persons—became converts to the doctrine.* The change above alluded to was, in fact, the reflection of the

* Of the two principal leaders of the movement, one (Belinski) was the son of a poor military surgeon, and the other (Herzen) was of illegitimate birth.

socialistic movement which was to culminate in the revolutionary agitation of 1848.

It may seem to some people strange that in Russia, under the severe rule of Nicholas, who habitually stamped out most rigorously all ideas and theories which could by any possibility be considered revolutionary, such principles as these should have been allowed to find expression in the periodical literature. It must, however, be remembered that down till 1848 the revolutionary power of these ideas was not generally recognized, and that some of them were quite in accordance with the policy of the Emperor himself. Nicholas always felt a profound antipathy to philosophy and abstract ideas of all kinds, and desired that his subjects should confine their attention to their personal concerns and their material welfare. He had an instinctive conviction that for ordinary mortals material welfare was of far more importance than those vague sublime blessings that dreamy philosophical minds were always longing to obtain; and this instinctive conviction of his seemed to find a clear, energetic expression in the writers of the new school, who made no allusions to ancient Romans, republican institutions, or constitutional monarchy, and who in general bore no resemblance to "the men of December," or to Polish conspirators—the only revolutionary types with which Nicholas was personally acquainted. If the writers themselves were aware of the revolutionary element which their ideas contained, they carefully concealed the fact. Indeed, we must do them the justice to say that they displayed an amount of literary tact and dexterity that might have blinded more sagacious men than the Press-censors of that time. When they could not venture to express themselves plainly, they threw out intelligible hints, and the public very soon learned "to read between the lines."

This new intellectual movement was spreading rapidly when it was suddenly arrested by political events in the West. The February Revolution in Paris, and the political fermentation which appeared during 1848-49 in almost every country in Europe, alarmed the Emperor Nicholas and his counsellors. A Russian army was sent into Austria to suppress the Hungarian insurrection and save the power of the Hapsburg dynasty, and the most stringent measures were taken to prevent disorders at home. One of the first precautions for the preservation of domestic tranquility was to muzzle the Press more firmly than before, and to silence

the aspirations towards social reform ; henceforth nothing could be printed which was not in strict accordance with the ultra-patriotic theory of Russian history, as expressed by Count Benkendorff :— “ The past has been admirable, the present is more than magnificent, and the future will surpass all that the human imagination can conceive ! ” The alarm caused by the revolutionary disorders spread to the non-official world, and gave rise to much patriotic self-congratulation. “ The nations of the West,” it was said, “ envy us, and if they knew us better—if they could see how happy and prosperous we are—they would envy us still more. We ought not, however, to withdraw from Europe our solicitude ; its hostility should not deprive us of our high mission of saving order and restoring rest to the nations ; we ought to teach them to obey authority as we do. It is for us to introduce the saving principle of order into a world that has fallen a prey to anarchy. Russia ought not to abandon that mission which has been intrusted to her by the heavenly and by the earthly Tsar.”*

Men who saw in the significant political eruption of 1848 nothing but an outburst of meaningless, aimless anarchy, and who believed that their country was destined to restore order throughout the civilized world, had of course little time or inclination to think of putting their own house in order. No one now spoke of the necessity of social reform ; the recently-awakened aspirations and expectations seemed to be completely forgotten. The critics returned to their old theory that art and literature should be cultivated for their own sake and not used as a vehicle for the propagation of ideas foreign to their nature. It seemed, in short, as if all the prolific ideas which had for a time occupied the public attention had been merely “ writ in water,” and had now disappeared without leaving a trace behind them.

In reality, however, the movement had been by no means unproductive. The majority of those who had sympathized with it and been affected by it were merely silenced or momentarily frightened. Though no protest was allowed to appear in the literature, many people did not share the pseudo-patriotism which taught that all manner of oppression and abuses should be borne with silent resignation, provided that Russia was powerful in the military sense

* These words were written by Tchaudá-f, who, a few years before, had vigorously attacked the Slavophiles for enouncing similar views.

of the term and feared by her Western neighbors. In St. Petersburg began to be formed coteries of young men who followed attentively the political drama that was being played out in the West, and studied those social and economic questions which were the chief cause of the political agitation. Of their studies in political economy and social science I shall have occasion to speak hereafter. Even among those who did not take the trouble to study the matter there were many who instinctively rejected the interpretation adopted by the Government and the official press, and who could not join in the anathemas against political liberty or in the praises of patriarchal autocracy. In short, the conservative reaction and the accompanying antipathy to all social and political questions were neither so strong nor so deep as they seemed. When the Crimean War broke out they acquired an additional momentary strength, but when the war proved disastrous, and the Emperor Nicholas, who was their living incarnation, died, they disappeared as if by enchantment, and were succeeded by a passionate enthusiasm for political and social reform such as Russia had never seen before. This strange intellectual and moral revival and its important practical results will be described in the sequel.

I trust I have said sufficient to show what a close intellectual connection has existed between Russia and Western Europe since the time of Peter the Great. Every intellectual movement which has appeared in Russia during the last century and a half has been the reflection of some movement in France or Germany. Thus the window which Peter opened in order to enable his subjects to look into Europe has well served its purpose.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MOSCOW AND THE SLAVOPHILS.

The "Lions" of Moscow—Easter Eve in the Kremlin—Curious Custom—Anecdote of the Emperor Nicholas—Domiciliary Visits of the Iberian Madonna—The Streets of Moscow—Recent Changes in the Character of the City—Vulgar Conception of the Slavophiles—Opinion founded on Personal Acquaintance—Slavophil Sentiment a Century ago—Origin and Development of the Slavophil Doctrine—Slavophilism essentially Moscovite—The Panslavist Element—The Slavophiles and the Emancipation—*The Moscow Gazette*.

MOSCOW has been so often minutely and graphically described by all manner of tourists—artistic, archæological, religious, statistical, military, and facetious—that those who read books of travel must be already familiar with its general appearance and the "lions" which it contains. I consider it unnecessary, therefore, to try the patience of the reader by a new attempt at description. Perhaps I ought so far to conform to custom as to reproduce from my note-book and my imagination my "first impressions" on entering the ancient capital of the Tsars, and to pay my tribute of admiration to the picturesque beauty of the place. Unfortunately—or perhaps fortunately—I did not jot down my impressions at the moment, and now, after a considerable lapse of time, I should have great difficulty in recalling them. The reader does not, however, lose much by their being omitted, for they were not in any sense original or worthy of being chronicled. Of course, during the first few days, I visited all the officially recognized objects of interest—the Kremlin, with its picturesque towers and six centuries of historical associations; the Cathedral, containing the venerated tombs of martyrs, saints, and Tsars; the old churches, with their quaint, archaic, richly-decorated Icons; the "Patriarchs' Treasury," rich in jeweled ecclesiastical vestments and vessels of silver and gold; the ancient and the modern palace; the Ethnological Museum, showing the costumes and physiognomy of all the various races in the Empire; the archæological col-

lections, containing many objects that recall the barbaric splendor of old Muscovy; the picture-gallery, with Ivánof's gigantic picture, in which patriotic Russian critics find occult merits which place it above anything that Raphael ever produced! Of course I climbed up to the top of the tall belfry which rejoices in the name of "Ivan the Great," and looked down on the "gilded domes"* of the churches, the bright green roofs of the houses, and far away beyond these the gently undulating country with the "Sparrow Hills," from which Napoleon is said, in cicerone language, to have "gazed upon the doomed city." Of course I walked about the bazaars in the hope of finding interesting specimens of genuine native art-industry, and was urgently invited to purchase every conceivable article which I did not want. Of course I dined at the most noted Traktirs, and made the acquaintance of the caviar, sturgeons, sterlets, and other delicacies for which these institutions are famous—deafened the while by the deep tones of the colossal barrel-organ, out of all proportion to the size of the room. Of course I visited also some of the more modest Traktirs, and gazed with wonder, not unmixed with fear, at the oceans of weak tea which the inmates consumed. But of these sights some have left such a slight impression on my memory, and others have been so vulgarized by familiarity, that I feel quite incapable of forming out of them an interesting picture, or drawing from them the inspiration necessary for making suitable sentimental reflections.

One scene, however, I remember distinctly. It was Easter Eve, and I had gone with a friend to the Kremlin to witness the Easter ceremonies. Though the rain was falling heavily, an immense crowd of people had assembled in and around the cathedral. The crowd was of the most mixed kind. There stood the patient bearded *muzhik* (peasant) in his well-worn sheep-skin; the big, burly, self-satisfied merchant in his long black glossy coat; the noble with fashionable great-coat and umbrella; thinly clad, rheumatic old women shivering in the cold, and bright-eyed young damsels with their warm cloaks drawn closely around them; white-haired old men with wallet and pilgrim's staff, and mischievous urchins with faces for the moment preternaturally demure

* Allowance must be made here for poetical license. In reality, very few of the domes are gilt. The great majority of them are painted green, like the roofs of the houses.

—all standing patiently and waiting for the announcement of the glad tidings: “He is risen!” As midnight approached, the hum of voices gradually ceased, till, as the clock struck twelve, the deep-toned bell on “Ivan the Great” began to toll, and in answer to this signal all the bells in Moscow suddenly sent forth a merry peal.

As my recollections are a little hazy, and I have never been able to master thoroughly the intricacies of Orthodox ceremonial, I cannot describe in detail what took place, but the general effect has remained graven on my memory. Every one held in his hand a lighted taper, and these thousands of little lights produced a curious illumination, giving to the surrounding buildings a picturesqueness of which they cannot boast in broad daylight. Meanwhile every bell in Moscow—and their name is legion—seemed frantically desirous of drowning its neighbor’s voice, the solemn boom of the great one overhead mingling curiously with the sharp, fussy “ting-a-ting-ting” of diminutive rivals. If demons dwell in Moscow and dislike bell-ringing, as is generally supposed, then there must have been at that moment a general stampede of the powers of darkness, such as is described by Milton in his poem on the Annunciation; and as if this deafening din were not enough, big guns were fired in rapid succession from a battery of artillery close at hand! How far this introduction of artillery into the ceremony stimulates the religious enthusiasm of the people I cannot say, but it certainly had a most wonderful effect on a Russian friend who accompanied me. When in his normal condition, that gentleman was a quiet, undemonstrative person, devoted to science, an adherent of Western civilization in general and of Darwinism in particular, and a thorough skeptic with regard to all forms of religious belief; but the influence of the surroundings—especially of the big guns—was too much for his philosophical equanimity. For a moment his orthodox Moscovite soul awoke from its accustomed skeptical, cosmopolitan lethargy. After crossing himself repeatedly—an act of devotion which I had never before seen him perform—he grasped my arm, and pointing to the crowd, said in an exultant tone of voice, “Look there! There is a sight that you can see nowhere but in the ‘white-stone city.’* Are not the Russians a religious people?”

* *Bêlokámenny*, meaning “of white-stone,” is one of the popular names of Moscow

To this unexpected question I gave a monosyllabic assent, and refrained from disturbing my friend's new-born enthusiasm by any discordant note ; but I must confess that this sudden outburst of deafening noise and dazzling light aroused in my heretical breast feelings of a warlike rather than a religious kind. For a moment I could imagine myself in ancient Moscow, and could almost fancy the people were being called out to repel a Tartar horde already thundering at the gates !

I had intended to remain till the end of the service, in order to witness the ceremony of blessing the Easter cakes, which were ranged—each one with a lighted taper stuck in it—in long rows outside of the cathedral ; but the rain damped my curiosity, and I went home about two o'clock.

Had I remained I should have witnessed another curious custom, which consists in giving and receiving kisses of fraternal love. This practice I have since had frequent opportunities of observing. Theoretically one ought to embrace and be embraced by all present—indicating thereby that all are brethren in Christ—but the refinements of modern life have made innovations in the practice, and most people confine their salutations to their friends and acquaintances. When two friends meet during that night or on the following day, the one says, "*Christós voskrés !*" ("Christ hath arisen !"), and the other replies, "*Vo ístiné voskrés !*" ("In truth He hath arisen !"). They then kiss each other three times on the right and left cheek alternately. The custom is more or less observed in all classes of society, and the Emperor himself conforms to it.

This reminds me of an anecdote which is related of the Emperor Nicholas, tending to show that he had at least a little human nature under his Imperial and imperious exterior. On coming out of his cabinet one Easter morning, he said to the soldier who was mounting guard at the door the ordinary words of salutation, "Christ has arisen !" and received, instead of the ordinary reply, a flat contradiction—"Not at all, your Imperial Majesty !" Astounded by such an unexpected answer—for no one ventured to dissent from Nicholas even in the most guarded and respectful terms—he instantly demanded an explanation. The soldier, trembling at his own audacity, explained that he was a Jew, and could not conscientiously admit the fact of the resurrection. This boldness for con-

science sake so pleased the Tsar that he gave the man a handsome Easter present.

The Russians in general, and the Moscovites in particular, as the quintessence of all that is Russian, are certainly a religious people, as my friend had remarked, but their piety sometimes finds modes of expression which rather shock the Protestant mind. As an instance of these, I may mention the domiciliary visits of the Iberian Madonna. This celebrated Icon, for reasons which I have never heard satisfactorily explained, is held in peculiar veneration by the Moscovites, and occupies in popular estimation a position analogous to the tutelary deities of ancient pagan cities. Thus when Napoleon was about to enter the city in 1812, the populace clamorously called upon the Metropolitan to take the Madonna, and lead them out armed with hatchets against the hosts of the infidel; and when the Tsar visits Moscow, he generally drives straight from the railway-station to the little chapel where the Icon resides—near one of the entrances to the Kremlin—and there offers up a short prayer.* Every Orthodox Russian, as he passes this chapel, uncovers and crosses himself, and whenever a religious service is performed in it there is always a considerable group of worshippers. Some of the richer inhabitants, however, are not content with thus performing their devotions in public before the Icon. They like to have it from time to time in their houses, and the ecclesiastical authorities think fit to humor this strange fancy. Accordingly every morning the Iberian Madonna may be seen driving about the city from one house to another in a carriage and four! The carriage may be at once recognized, not from any peculiarity in its structure, for it is an ordinary close carriage such as may be obtained at livery stables, but by the fact that the coachman sits bareheaded, and all the people in the street uncover and cross themselves as it passes. Arrived at a house to which it has been invited, it is carried through all the rooms, and in the principal apartment a short religious service is performed before it. As it is being brought in or taken away, female servants may sometimes be seen to kneel on the floor so that it may be carried over them.

It might be supposed that this strange practice must be displeasing to the bulk of the population, because it necessitates the

* So at least I have been repeatedly told by people in Moscow.

absence of the Icon from the chapel during a great part of the day. To prevent any dissatisfaction of this kind, the ecclesiastical authorities have fallen upon a most ingenious expedient. The Icon has a representative, in the form of a copy, which takes its place during its absence; and thus the devotions of the faithful and the flow of pecuniary contributions do not suffer interruption. These contributions, together with the sums paid for the domiciliary visits, amount to a considerable yearly sum, and go—if I have not been misinformed—to swell the revenues of the Metropolitan.

A single drive or stroll through Moscow will suffice to convince the traveler, even if he knows nothing of Russian history, that the city is not, like its modern rival, the artificial creation of a far-seeing, self-willed autocrat, but rather a natural product which has grown up slowly and been modified according to the constantly changing wants of the population. A few of the streets have been Europeanized—in all except the paving, which is everywhere execrably Asiatic—to suit the tastes of those who have adopted European culture, but the great majority of them still retain much of their ancient character and primitive irregularity. As soon as we diverge from the principal thoroughfares, we find one-storied wooden houses which appear to have been transported bodily from the country, with courtyard, garden, stables, and other appurtenances. The whole is no doubt a little compressed, for land has here a certain value, but the character is in no way changed, and we have some difficulty in believing that we are not in the suburbs but near the center of a great town. There is nothing that can by any possibility be called street architecture. Though there is unmistakable evidence of the streets having been laid out according to a preconceived plan, many of them show clearly that in their infancy they had a wayward will of their own, and bend to the right or left without any topographical justification. The houses, too, display considerable individuality of character, having evidently during the course of their construction paid no attention to their neighbors. Hence we find no regularly-built terraces, crescents, or squares. There is, it is true, a double circle of boulevards, but the houses which flank them have none of that regularity which we commonly associate with the term. Miserable hovels which in West-European cities would certainly hide themselves in some narrow lane or back slum here

stand composedly in the face of day by the side of a palatial residence, without having the least consciousness of the incongruity of their position, just as the unsophisticated *muzhik*, in his unsavory sheep-skin, can stand in the midst of a crowd of well-dressed people without feeling at all awkward or ashamed.

All this incongruity is destined, however, soon to disappear—or rather is already speedily disappearing. Moscow has become the center of a great network of railways, and is, or will soon be, the commercial and industrial capital of the Empire. Already her rapidly-increasing population is almost equal to that of St. Petersburg. The value of land and property is being doubled and trebled, and building speculations, with the aid of credit institutions of various kinds, are being carried on with feverish rapidity. Innovation has even dared to lay her impious hands on the venerable “Club Anglais,” the daily and nightly haunt of all the most noted Moscovite “antiquities” of the male sex, and has uncereemoniously turned the members out of doors, compelling them to seek shelter in some new edifice, built for speculative purposes by a self-made Israelitish millionaire or other commercial parvenu. Well may the men of the old school complain that the world is turned upside down, and regret the old times of Olympian serenity and repose! Those good old times are gone now, never to return. The ancient capital, which long gloried in its past historical associations, now glories in its present commercial prosperity, and looks forward with confidence to the future. Even the Slavophiles, the bold, obstinate champions of the ultra-Moscovite spirit, have changed with the times, and descended to the level of ordinary prosaic life. These men, who formerly spent years in seeking to determine the place of Moscow in the past and future history of humanity, have—to their honor be it said—become in these latter days town-councilors, and have devoted much of their time to devising ways and means of improving the drainage and the street-paving! But I am anticipating in a most unjustifiable way. I ought first to tell the reader who these Slavophiles were, and why they sought to correct the commonly-received conceptions of universal history.

The reader has probably heard of the Slavophiles as a set of fanatics who, some twenty-five or thirty years ago, were wont to go about in what they considered the ancient Russian costume, who wore beards in defiance of Peter the Great’s celebrated ukaze

and Nicholas's clearly-expressed wish anent shaving, who gloried in Moscovite barbarism, and had solemnly "sworn a feud" against European civilization and enlightenment. By the tourists of the time who visited Moscow they were regarded as among the most noteworthy lions of the place, and were commonly depicted in not very flattering colors. During the Crimean War they were known to be among the extreme Chauvinists who urged the necessity of planting the Greek cross on the desecrated dome of St. Sophia in Constantinople, and hoped to see the Emperor proclaimed "Pan-slavonic Tsar;" and after the termination of the war they were frequently accused of inventing Turkish atrocities, stirring up discontent among the Slavonic subjects of the Sultan, and secretly plotting for the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire. All this was known to me before I went to Russia, and I had consequently invested the Slavophiles with a halo of romance. Shortly after my arrival in St. Petersburg I heard something more about them which tended to increase my interest in them—they had caused, I was told, great trepidation among the highest official circles by petitioning the Emperor to resuscitate a certain ancient institution, called *Zemskié Sobóry*, which might be made to serve the purposes of a parliament! This threw a new light upon them; under the disguise of archæological conservatives they were evidently aiming at important liberal reforms. After all this it will readily be understood that I naturally took pains to procure letters of introduction to these interesting personages, and endeavored very soon after my arrival in Moscow to make their acquaintance.

As a foreigner and a heretic, I expected a very cold and distant reception from these uncompromising champions of Russian nationality and the Orthodox faith; but in this I was most agreeably disappointed. By all of them I was received in the most amiable and friendly way, and I soon discovered that my preconceived ideas of them were very far from the truth. Instead of wild fanatics I found quiet, extremely intelligent, highly-educated gentlemen, speaking foreign languages with ease and elegance, and deeply imbued with that Western culture which they are commonly supposed to despise. And this first impression was amply confirmed by subsequent experience during several years of friendly intercourse. They always showed themselves men of earnest character and strong convictions, but they never said or

did anything that could justify the appellation of fanatics. Like all philosophical theorists, they often allowed their logic to blind them to facts, but their reasonings were always very plausible—so plausible, indeed, that, had I been a Russian, they would have almost persuaded me to be a Slavophil, at least during the time they were talking to me.

To understand their doctrine we must know something of its origin and development.

The origin of the Slavophil sentiment, which must not be confounded with the Slavophil doctrine, is to be sought in the latter half of the seventeenth century, when the Tsars of Muscovy were introducing innovations in Church and State. These innovations were profoundly displeasing to the people. A large portion of the lower classes sought refuge in Old Ritualism or sectarianism, and imagined that Tsar Peter, who called himself by the heretical title of “Imperator,” was an emanation of the Evil Principle. The nobles did not go quite so far. They remained members of the official Church, and restricted themselves to hinting that Peter was the son, not of Satan, but of a German surgeon—a lineage which, according to the conceptions of the time, was a little less objectionable; but most of them were very hostile to the changes, and complained bitterly of the new burdens which these changes entailed. Under Peter’s immediate successors, when not only the principles of administration but also the administrators were German, this hostility greatly increased.

So long as the innovations appeared only in the official activity of the Government, the patriotic, conservative spirit was obliged to keep silence; but when the foreign influence spread to the social life of the Court aristocracy, the opposition began to find a literary expression. In the time of Catherine II., when Gallomania was at its height, comedies and satirical journals ridiculed those who, “blinded by some externally brilliant gifts of foreigners, not only prefer foreign countries to their native land, but even despise their fellow-countrymen, and think that a Russian ought to borrow all—even personal character. As if Nature, arranging all things with such wisdom, and bestowing on all regions the gifts and customs which are appropriate to the climate, had been so unjust as to refuse to the Russians a character of their own! As if she condemned them to wander over all regions, and to adopt by bits the various customs of various nations, in order to compose

out of the mixture a new character appropriate to no nation whatever!" Numerous passages of this kind might be quoted, attacking the "monkeyism" and "parrotism" of those who indiscriminately adopted foreign manners and customs--those who

"Sauntered Europe round,
And gathered ev'ry vice in ev'ry ground."

And sometimes the terms and metaphors employed were more forcible than refined. One satirical journal, for instance, relates an amusing story about certain Russian little pigs that went to foreign lands to enlighten their understanding, and came back to their country full-grown swine. The national pride was wounded by the thought that Russians could be called "clever apes who feed on foreign intelligence," and many writers, stung by such reproaches, fell into the opposite extreme, discovering unheard-of excellences in the Russian mind and character, and vociferously decrying everything foreign in order to place these imagined excellences in a stronger light by contrast. Even when they recognized that their country was not quite so advanced in civilization as certain other nations, they congratulated themselves on the fact, and invented by way of justification an ingenious theory, which was afterwards developed by the Slavophiles. "The nations of the West," they said, "began to live before us, and are consequently more advanced than we are; but we have on that account no reason to envy them, for we can profit by their errors, and avoid those deep-rooted evils from which they are suffering. He who has just been born is happier than he who is dying."

Thus, we see, a patriotic reaction against the introduction of foreign institutions and the inordinate admiration of foreign culture already existed in Russia a century ago. It did not, however, take the form of a philosophical theory till a much later period, when a similar movement was going on in various countries of Western Europe.

After the overthrow of the great Napoleonic Empire a reaction against cosmopolitanism and a romantic enthusiasm for nationality spread over Europe like an epidemic. Blind enthusiastic patriotism became the fashionable sentiment of the time. Each nation took to admiring itself complacently, to praising its own character and achievements, and to idealizing its historical and mythical past. National peculiarities, "local color," ancient customs, traditional

superstitions—in short, everything that a nation believed to be specially and exclusively its own, now raised an enthusiasm similar to that which had been formerly excited by cosmopolitan conceptions founded on the law of Nature. The movement produced good and evil results. In serious minds it led to a deep and conscientious study of history, national literature, popular mythology, and the like, whilst in frivolous inflammable spirits it gave birth merely to a torrent of patriotic fervor and rhetorical exaggeration. The Slavophiles were the Russian representatives of this nationalistic reaction, and displayed both its serious and its frivolous elements.

Among the most important products of this movement in Germany was the Hegelian theory of universal history. According to Hegel's views, which were generally accepted by those who occupied themselves with philosophical questions, universal history was described as "Progress in the consciousness of freedom."* In each period of the world's history, it was explained, some one nation or race had been intrusted with the high mission of enabling the Absolute Reason or *Weltgeist* to express itself in objective existence, while the other nations and races had for the time no metaphysical justification for their existence, and no higher duty than to imitate slavishly the favored rival in which the *Weltgeist* had for the moment chosen to incorporate itself. The incarnation had taken place first in the Eastern Monarchies, then in Greece, next in Rome, and lastly in the Germanic race; and it was generally assumed, if not openly asserted, that this mystical Metempsychosis of the Absolute was now at an end. The circle of existence was complete. In the Germanic peoples the *Weltgeist* had formed its highest and final expression!

Russians in general knew nothing about German philosophy, and were consequently not in any way affected by these ideas, but there was in Moscow a small group of young men who ardently studied German literature and metaphysics, and they were much shocked by Hegel's views. Ever since the brilliant reign of Catherine II., who had defeated the Turks and had dreamed of resuscitating the Byzantine Empire, and especially since the memorable events of 1812-15, when Alexander I. appeared as the liberator of enthralled Europe and the arbiter of her destinies,

* *Fortschritt im Bewusstsein der Freiheit.*

Russians were firmly convinced that their country was destined to play a most important part in human history. Already the great Russian historian Karamzín had declared that henceforth Clio must be silent, or accord to Russia a prominent place in the history of the nations. Now, by the Hegelian theory, the whole of the Slav race was left out in the cold, with no high mission, with no new truths to divulge, with nothing better to do than to imitate the Germans ! The patriotic young philosophers of Moscow could not, of course, adopt this view. Whilst accepting the fundamental principles, they declared the theory to be incomplete. The incompleteness, according to their opinion, lay in the assumption that humanity had already entered on the final stage of its development. The Teutonic nations were, perhaps, for the moment the leaders in the march of civilization, but there was no reason to suppose that they would always retain that privileged position. On the contrary, there were already symptoms that their ascendancy was drawing to a close. "Western Europe," it was said, "presents a strange, saddening spectacle. Opinion struggles against opinion, power against power, throne against throne. Science, Art, and Religion, the three chief motors of social life, have lost their force. We venture to make an assertion which to many at present may seem strange, but which will be in a few years only too evident : Western Europe is on the high-road to ruin ! We, however, are young and fresh, and have taken no part in the crimes of Europe. We have a great mission to fulfill. Our name is already inscribed on the tablets of victory, and now we have to inscribe our spirit in the history of the human mind. A higher kind of victory—the victory of Science, Art, and Faith—awaits us on the ruins of tottering Europe !" *

This conclusion was supported by arguments drawn from history—or, at least, what was believed to be history. The European world was represented as being composed of two hemispheres—the Eastern, or Græco-Slavonic, on the one hand, and the Western, or Roman Catholic and Protestant, on the other. These two hemispheres, it was said, are distinguished from each other by many fundamental characteristics. In both of them Christianity formed originally the basis of civilization, but in the West it became distorted and gave a false direction to the intel-

* These words were written by Prince Odóefski.

lectual development. By placing the logical reason of the learned above the conscience of the whole Church, Roman Catholicism produced Protestantism, which proclaimed the right of private judgment and consequently produced innumerable sects. The dry, logical spirit which was thus fostered created a purely intellectual, one-sided philosophy, which inevitably leads to utter skepticism, by blinding men to those great truths which lie above the sphere of reasoning and logic. The Græco-Slavonic world, on the contrary, having accepted Christianity not from Rome but from Byzantium, received pure Orthodoxy and true enlightenment, and was thus saved alike from Papal tyranny and from Protestant freethinking. Hence the Eastern Christians have preserved faithfully not only the ancient dogmas, but also the ancient spirit of Christianity—that spirit of pious humility, resignation, and brotherly love, which Christ taught by precept and example. If they have not yet a philosophy, they will create one, and it will far surpass all previous systems, for in the writings of the Greek Fathers are to be found the germs of a broader, a deeper, and a truer philosophy than the dry, meager rationalism of the West—a philosophy founded not on the logical faculty alone, but on the broader basis of human nature as a whole.

The fundamental characteristics of the Græco-Slavonic world—so runs the Slavophil theory—have been displayed in the history of Russia. Whilst throughout Western Christendom the principle of individual judgment and reckless individual egotism have exhausted the social forces and brought society to the verge of incurable anarchy and inevitable dissolution, the social and political history of Russia has been harmonious and peaceful. It presents no struggles between the different social classes, and no conflicts between Church and State. All the factors have worked in unison, and the development has been guided by the spirit of pure Orthodoxy. But in this harmonious picture there is one big, ugly, black spot—Peter, falsely styled “the Great,” and his so-called reforms. Instead of following the wise policy of his ancestors, Peter rejected the national traditions and principles, and applied to his country, which belonged to the Eastern world, the principles of Western civilization. His reforms, conceived in a foreign spirit, and elaborated by men who did not possess the national instincts, were forced upon the nation against its will, and the result was precisely what might have been expected.

The "broad Slavonic nature" could not be controlled by institutions which had been invented by narrow-minded, pedantic, German bureaucrats, and like another Sampson, it pulled down the building in which foreign legislators sought to confine it. The attempt to introduce foreign culture had a still worse effect. The upper classes, charmed and dazzled by the glare and glitter of Western science, threw themselves impulsively on the newly-found treasures, and thereby condemned themselves to moral slavery and intellectual sterility. Fortunately, however—and herein lay one of the fundamental principles of the Slavophil doctrine—the common people had not been infected by the imported civilization. Through all the changes which the administration and the noblesse underwent the peasantry preserved religiously in their hearts "the living legacy of antiquity," the essence of Russian nationality, "a clear spring welling up living waters, hidden and unknown, but powerful."* To recover this lost legacy by studying the character, customs, and institutions of the peasantry, to lead the educated classes back to the path from which they had strayed, and to re-establish that intellectual and moral unity which had been disturbed by the foreign importations—such was the task which the Slavophiles proposed to themselves.

Deeply imbued with that romantic spirit which distorted all the intellectual activity of the time, the Slavophiles often indulged in the wildest exaggerations, condemning everything foreign and praising everything Russian. When in this mood they saw in the history of the West nothing but violence, slavery, and egotism, and in that of their own country free-will, liberty, and peace. The fact that Russia did not possess free political institutions was adduced as a precious fruit of that spirit of Christian resignation and self-sacrifice which places the Russian at such an immeasurable height above the proud, selfish European; and because Russia possessed few of the comforts and conveniences of common life, the West was accused of having made comfort its God! We need not, however, dwell on these puerilities, which only gained for their authors the reputation of being ignorant, narrow-minded men, imbued with a hatred of enlightenment and desirous of lead-

* This was one of the favorite themes of Khomiakóv, the Slavophil poet and theologian.

ing their country back to its primitive barbarism. What the Slavophiles really condemned, at least in their calmer moments, was, not European culture, but the uncritical, indiscriminate adoption of it by their countrymen. Their tirades against foreign culture must appear excusable when we remember that many Russians of the upper ranks could speak and write French more correctly than their native language, and that even the great national poet Púshkin was not ashamed to confess that "the language of Europe" was more familiar to him than his mother tongue!

The Slavophil doctrine, though it made a great noise in the world, never found many adherents. The society of St. Petersburg regarded it as one of those harmless provincial eccentricities which are always to be found in Moscow. In the modern capital, with its foreign name, its streets and squares on the European model, its palaces and churches in the Renaissance style, and its passionate love of everything French, any attempt to resuscitate the old Boyáric times would have been eminently ridiculous. Indeed, hostility to St. Petersburg and to "the Petersburg period of Russian history" is one of the characteristic traits of genuine Slavophilism. In Moscow the doctrine found a more appropriate home. There the ancient churches, with the tombs of Grand Princes and holy martyrs, the palace in which the Tsars of Muscovy had lived, the Kremlin which had resisted—not always successfully—the attacks of savage Tartars and heretical Poles, the venerable Icons that had many a time protected the people from danger, the block of masonry from which, on solemn occasions, the Tsar and the Patriarch had addressed the assembled multitude—these, and a hundred other monuments sanctified by tradition, have kept alive in the popular memory some vague remembrance of the olden time, and are still capable of awakening antiquarian patriotism. The inhabitants, too, have preserved something of the old Muscovite character. Whilst successive sovereigns have been striving to make the country a progressive European empire, Moscow has remained the home of passive conservatism and an asylum for the discontented, especially for the disappointed aspirants to Imperial favor. Abandoned by the modern Emperors, she can glory in her ancient Tsars. But even the Moscovites were not prepared to accept the Slavophil doctrine in the extreme form which it assumed, and were not a little

perplexed by the eccentricities of those who professed it. Plain, sensible people, though they might be proud of being citizens of the ancient capital, and might thoroughly enjoy a joke at the expense of St. Petersburg, could not understand a little coterie of enthusiasts, who sought neither official rank nor decorations, who slighted many of the conventionalities of the higher classes to which by birth and education they belonged, who loved to fraternize with the common people, and who dressed in the national costume which had been discarded by the nobles since the time of Peter the Great.

The Slavophiles thus remained merely a small literary party, which probably never counted more than a dozen members, but their influence was out of all proportion to their numbers. They preached successfully the doctrine that the historical development of Russia has been peculiar, that her present social and political organization is radically different from that of the countries of Western Europe, and that consequently the social and political evils from which she suffers are not to be cured by the remedies which have proved efficacious in France and Germany. These truths, which now appear commonplace, were formerly by no means generally recognized, and the Slavophiles deserve credit for directing attention to them. Besides this, they helped to awaken in the upper classes a lively sympathy with the poor, oppressed, and despised peasantry. So long as the Emperor Nicholas lived they had to confine themselves to a purely literary activity; but at the commencement of the present reign they were enabled to descend into the arena of practical politics, and played a most useful and honorable part in the emancipation of the serfs. Of this I shall have occasion to speak hereafter. In the new local self-government, too—the *Zemstvo* and the new municipal institutions—they have labored energetically and to good purpose.

But what of their Panslavistic aspirations? This is a subject which has at present a special interest, but on which there is not much to be said. By their theory they were constrained to pay attention to the Slav race as a whole, but they were more Russian than Slav, and more Moscovite than Russian. The Panslavistic element has consequently always occupied a secondary place in Slavophil doctrine. Though they have done much to stimulate popular sympathy with the South Slavonic tribes, and have always cherished the hope that these tribes would one day throw off the

bondage of the German and the Turk, they have never proposed any elaborate project for the solution of the Eastern Question. So far as I was able to gather from their conversation, they seemed to favor the idea of a grand Slavonic confederation, in which the hegemony would of course belong to Russia. In ordinary times the only steps which they took for the realization of this idea consisted in contributing money for schools and churches among the Slav population of Austria and Turkey, and in educating young Bulgarians in Russia. During the Cretan insurrection they sympathized warmly with the insurgents as co-religionists, but since that time their Hellenic sympathies have greatly diminished, because the Greeks have shown in various ways that they have political aspirations inconsistent with Panslavism, and that they are likely to become the rivals rather than the allies of the Slavs. In the present movement the Slavophiles have been most active and energetic in sending assistance of all kinds to the Servians.

The Press of Western Europe commonly confounds the Slavophiles with the party which is represented by the *Moscow Gazette* and its editor, M. Katkoff. In reality the two are by no means identical. The *Moscow Gazette* has no peculiar love of ancient Russia, is no admirer of the rural commune, sympathizes with the landed proprietors rather than with the peasants, regards all questions from the political rather than the ethnological or religious point of view, belongs to the orthodox school of political economists, and advocates the principles of free trade. In these and other respects it differs decidedly from the Slavophiles. But the two agree in one respect, and this, perhaps, excuses the habit of confounding them : as soon as political complications arise, they both become violently patriotic and bellicose.*

* In this chapter as elsewhere I have used the word *Muscovite* in the sense of "pertaining to the Tsardom of Muscovy," and *Moscovite* in the sense of "pertaining to the town of Moscow."

CHAPTER XXVII.

CHURCH AND STATE.

St. Petersburg and Moscow—Russia Outside of the Medieval Papal Commonwealth—Influence of the Greek Church—Ecclesiastical History of Russia—Relations between Church and State—Eastern Orthodoxy and the Russian National Church—The Synod—Ecclesiastical Grumbling—Local Ecclesiastical Administration—The Black Clergy and the Monasteries—The Character of the Eastern Church reflected in the History of Religious Art—Practical Consequences—The Union Scheme.

HAVING often heard that the Russians were an intensely religious people, I was somewhat surprised to find, during my first sojourn in St. Petersburg, that those with whom I came in contact seemed singularly indifferent to religious matters. Though uncompromising adherents of the Greek Orthodox Church and accustomed to observe to a certain extent its rites and ceremonies, they appeared to be free alike from deep religious feeling and from shallow religious cant. Some friends to whom I communicated this impression endeavored to explain it by reminding me that St. Petersburg was a cosmopolitan rather than a Russian city, and assured me that I should find the genuine Russian spirit in the inhabitants of Moscow.

My subsequent prolonged acquaintance with the Moscovites tended to confirm rather than dispel the impression received in St. Petersburg, and fully convinced me that the Russian educated classes, though warmly attached to their Church, are in general not at all "religious" in the sense in which we commonly use the word. I found, however, in the ancient capital, especially among those who were more or less tinged with Slavophil sentiment, a certain number of persons who evidently took a deep interest in ecclesiastical affairs. They assured me that Orthodoxy was one of the most essential elements of Russian nationality, and that I could not possibly understand the past history and present con-

dition of Russia without knowing the past history and actual condition of the National Church. Though this statement seemed to me a little too strong, I considered it advisable to devote some attention to the subject, and I propose now to present to the reader a few of the more important results of my studies in that field.

If the Popes did not succeed in realizing their grand design of creating a vast European empire based on theocratic principles, they succeeded at least in inspiring with a feeling of brotherhood and a vague consciousness of common interest all the nations which acknowledged their spiritual supremacy. These nations, whilst remaining politically independent and frequently coming into hostile contact with each other, all looked to Rome as the capital of the Christian world, and to the Pope as the highest terrestrial authority. Though the Church did not annihilate nationality, it made a wide breach in the political barriers, and formed a channel for international communication, by which the social and intellectual progress of each nation became known to all the other members of the great Christian confederacy. Throughout the length and breadth of the Papal Commonwealth, educated men had a common language, a common literature, a common scientific method, and to a certain extent a common jurisprudence. Western Christendom was thus not merely an abstract conception or a geographical expression; if not a political, it was at least a religious and intellectual, unit.

For centuries Russia stood outside of this religious and intellectual confederation, for her Church connected her not with Rome but with Constantinople, and Papal Europe looked upon her as belonging to the barbarous East. When the Tartar hosts swept over her plains, burnt her towns and villages, and finally incorporated her into the Great Mongol Empire, the so-called Christian world took no interest in the struggle except in so far as its own safety was threatened. And as time wore on, the barriers which separated the two great sections of Christendom became more and more formidable. The aggressive pretensions and ambitious schemes of the Vatican produced in the Greek Orthodox world a profound antipathy to the Roman Catholic Church and to Western influence of every kind. So strong was this aversion, that when the nations of the West awakened in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries from their intellectual lethargy and began

to move forward on the path of intellectual and material progress, Russia not only remained unmoved, but looked on the new civilization with suspicion and fear as a thing heretical and accursed. We have here one of the chief reasons why Russia, at the present day, is in many respects less civilized than the nations of Western Europe.

But it is not merely in this negative way that the acceptance of Christianity from Constantinople has affected the fate of Russia. The Greek Church, whilst excluding Roman Catholic civilization, exerted at the same time a powerful positive influence on the historical development of the nation.

The Church of the West inherited from old Rome something of that logical, juridical, administrative spirit which had created the Roman law, and something of that ambition and dogged, energetic perseverance that had formed nearly the whole known world into a great centralized empire. The Bishops of Rome early conceived the design of reconstructing that old Empire on a new basis, and have ever striven to create a universal Christian theocratic State, in which kings and other civil authorities should be the subordinates of Christ's Vicar upon earth. The Eastern Church, on the contrary, has remained true to her Byzantine traditions, and has never dreamed of such lofty pretensions. Accustomed to lean on the civil power, she has always been content to play a secondary part, and has never strenuously resisted the formation of national churches.

For about two centuries after the introduction of Christianity—from 988 till 1240—Russia formed, ecclesiastically speaking, part of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The metropolitans and the Bishops were Greeks by birth and education, and the ecclesiastical administration was guided and controlled by the Byzantine Patriarchs. But from the time of the Tartar invasion, when the communications with Constantinople became more difficult and educated native priests had become more numerous, this complete dependence on the Patriarch ceased. The Princes gradually arrogated to themselves the right of choosing the Metropolitan of Kiev—who was at that time the chief ecclesiastical dignitary in Russia—and merely sent their nominees to Constantinople for consecration. About 1448 this formality came to be dispensed with, and the Metropolitan was commonly consecrated by a council of Russian bishops. A further step in the direction of ecclesiastical

autonomy was taken in 1589, when the Tsar succeeded in procuring the consecration of a Russian Patriarch, equal in dignity and authority to the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria.

In all matters of external form the Patriarch of Moscow was a very important personage. He exercised a considerable influence in civil as well as ecclesiastical affairs, bore the official title of "great lord" (*veliki gosudár*), which had previously been reserved for the civil head of the State, and habitually received from the people scarcely less veneration than the Tsar himself. But in reality he possessed very little independent power. The Tsar was the real ruler in ecclesiastical as well as in civil affairs.*

The Russian Patriarchate came to an end in the time of Peter the Great. Peter wished among other things to reform the ecclesiastical administration, and to introduce into his country many novelties which the majority of the clergy and of the people regarded as heretical; and he clearly perceived that a bigoted, energetic Patriarch might throw considerable obstacles in his way, and cause him infinite annoyance. Though such a Patriarch might be deposed without any flagrant violation of the canonical formalities, the operation would necessarily be attended with great trouble and loss of time. Peter was no friend of roundabout tortuous methods, and preferred to remove the difficulty in his usual thorough violent fashion. When the Patriarch Adrian died, the customary short interregnum was prolonged for twenty years, and when the people had thus become accustomed to having no Patriarch, it was announced that no more Patriarchs would be elected. Their place was supplied by an ecclesiastical council or Synod, in which, as a contemporary explained, "the mainspring was Peter's power, and the pendulum his understanding." The great autoerat justly

* As this is frequently denied by Russians, it may be well to quote one authority out of many that might be cited. Bishop Makarii, whose erudition and good faith are alike above suspicion, says of Dimitry of the Don: "He arrogated to himself full, unconditional power over the Head of the Russian Church, and through him over the whole Russian Church itself" (*Istóriya Rússkoi Tserkvi*, V., p. 101). This is said of a Grand Prince who had strong rivals and had to treat the Church as an ally. When the Grand Princes became Tsars and had no longer any rivals, their power was certainly not diminished. Any further confirmation that may be required will be found in the life of the famous Patriarch Nikon.

considered that such a council could be much more easily managed than a stubborn Patriarch, and the wisdom of the measure has been duly appreciated by succeeding sovereigns. Though the idea of re-establishing the Patriarchate has more than once been raised, it has never been carried into execution. The Holy Synod remains, and is likely to remain, the highest ecclesiastical authority.

But the Emperor? What is his relation to the Synod and to the Church in general?

This is a question about which zealous Orthodox Russians are extremely sensitive. If a foreigner ventures to hint in their presence that the Emperor seems to have a considerable influence in the Church, he may inadvertently produce a little outburst of patriotic warmth and virtuous indignation. The truth is that many Russians have a pet theory on this subject, and have at the same time a dim consciousness that the theory is not quite in accordance with reality. They hold theoretically that the Orthodox Church has no "Head" but Christ, and is in some peculiar, undefined sense entirely independent of all terrestrial authority. In this respect it is often compared with the Anglican Church, and the comparison is made a theme for semi-religious, semi-patriotic exultation, which finds expression not only in conversation, but also in the literature. Khomiakóf, for instance, in one of his most vigorous poems, predicts that God will one day take the destiny of the world out of the hands of England in order to give it to Russia, and he adduces as one of the reasons for this transfer the fact that England "has chained, with sacrilegious hand, the Church of God to the pedestal of the vain earthly power." So far the theory. As to the facts, it is unquestionable that the Church enjoys much more liberty in England than in Russia, and that the Tsar exercises a much greater influence in ecclesiastical affairs than the Queen and Parliament. All who know the internal history of Russia are aware that the Government does not draw a clear line of distinction between the temporal and the spiritual, and that it occasionally uses the ecclesiastical organization for political purposes.

What then are the relations between Church and State?

To avoid confusion, we must carefully distinguish between the Eastern Orthodox Church as a whole and that section of it which is known as the Russian Church.

¹ The Eastern Orthodox Church* is, properly speaking, a confederation of independent churches without any central authority—a unity founded on the possession of a common dogma and on the theoretical but now unrealizable possibility of holding Ecumenical Councils. The Russian National Church is one of the members of this ecclesiastical confederation. In matters of faith, it is bound by the decisions of the ancient Ecumenical Councils, but in all other respects it enjoys complete independence and autonomy.

In relation to the Orthodox Church as a whole, the Emperor of Russia is nothing more than a simple member, and can no more interfere with its dogmas or ceremonial than a King of Italy or an Emperor of the French could modify Roman Catholic theology; but in relation to the Russian National Church his position is peculiar. He is described in one of the fundamental laws as “the supreme defender and preserver of the dogmas of the dominant faith,” and immediately afterwards it is said, “the autocratic power acts in the ecclesiastical administration by means of the most Holy Governing Synod, created by it.”† This describes very fairly the relations between the Emperor and the Church. He is merely the defender of the dogmas, and cannot in the least modify them; but he is at the same time the chief administrator, and uses the Synod as an instrument.

Some ingenious people who wish to prove that the creation of the Synod was not an innovation, represent the institution as a resuscitation of the ancient Local Councils; but this view is utterly untenable. The Synod is not a council of deputies from various sections of the Church, but a permanent college, or ecclesiastical senate, the members of which are appointed and dismissed by the Emperor as he thinks fit. It has no independent legislative authority, for its legislative projects do not become law till they have received the Imperial sanction; and they are always published, not in the name of the Church, but in the name of the Supreme Power. Even in matters of simple administration it is not independent, for all its resolutions require the consent of the Procureur, a layman nominated by his Majesty. In theory this functionary protests only against those resolutions which are not in

* Or Greek Orthodox Church, as it is sometimes called.

† Svod Zakonov I., §§ 42, 43.

accordance with the civil law of the country ; but as he alone has the right to address the Emperor directly on ecclesiastical concerns, and as all communications between the Emperor and the Synod must pass through his hands, he possesses in reality considerable power. Besides this, he can always influence the individual members by holding out prospects of advancement and decorations, and if this device fails, he can make the refractory members retire, and fill up their places with men of more pliable disposition. A council constituted in this way cannot, of course, display much independence of thought or action, especially in a country like Russia, where no one ventures to oppose openly the Imperial will.*

It must not, however, be supposed that the Russian ecclesiastics regard the Imperial authority with jealousy or dislike. They are all most loyal subjects, and warm adherents of autocracy. Those ideas of ecclesiastical independence which are so common in Western Europe, and that spirit of opposition to the civil power which animates the Roman Catholic clergy, are entirely foreign to their minds. If a bishop sometimes complains to an intimate friend that he has been brought to St. Petersburg and made a member of the Synod, merely to append his signature to official papers and to give his consent to foregone conclusions, his displeasure is directed, not against the Emperor, but against the Procureur. He is full of loyalty and devotion to the Tsar, and has no desire to see his Majesty excluded from all influence in ecclesiastical affairs ; but he feels saddened and humiliated when he finds that the whole government of the Church is in the hands of a lay functionary, who may be a military man, and who certainly looks at all matters from a layman's point of view.

A foreigner who hears ecclesiastics grumble or laymen express dissatisfaction with the existing state of things is apt to imagine that a secret struggle is going on between Church and State, and

* I have recently been informed that the Synod has, within the last few months, shown a most decided opposition to an important part of the ecclesiastical reforms which have been undertaken by the Procureur. This would seem to show, as some of my Russian friends point out to me, that the Synod is by no means so docile as I have represented it. In fairness I state the fact ; but I must add that, before drawing any general conclusions, we must know the *histoire secrète* of the affair, and I have no hope of obtaining this till I return to Russia.

that a party favorable to Disestablishment is at present being formed. In reality there is no such struggle and no such party. I have heard Russians propose and discuss every conceivable kind of political and social reforms, but I have never heard any of them speak about disestablishing the Church. Indeed, I do not know how the idea could be expressed in Russian, except by a lengthy circumlocution. So long as the autocratic power exists, no kind of administration can be exempted from Imperial control.

This close connection between Church and State and the thoroughly national character of the Russian Church is well illustrated by the history of the local ecclesiastical administration. The civil and the ecclesiastical administration have always had the same character and have always been modified by the same influences. The terrorism which was largely used by the Muscovite Tsars and brought to a climax by Peter the Great appeared equally in both. In the episcopal circulars, as in the Imperial ukazes, we find frequent mention of "most cruel corporal punishment," "cruel punishment with whips, so that the delinquent and others may not acquire the habit of practicing such insolence," and much more of the same kind. And these terribly severe measures were sometimes directed against very venial offenses. The Bishop of Vologda, for instance, in 1748 decrees "cruel corporal punishment" against priests who wear coarse and ragged clothes,* and the records of the Consistorial courts contain abundant proof that such decrees were rigorously executed. When Catherine II. introduced a more humane spirit into the civil administration, corporal punishment was at once abolished in the Consistorial courts, and the procedure was modified according to the accepted maxims of civil jurisprudence. But I must not weary the reader with tiresome historical details. Suffice it to say that, from the time of Peter the Great downwards, the character of all the more energetic sovereigns is reflected in the history of the ecclesiastical administration.

Each province, or "government," forms a diocese, and the bishop, like the civil governor, has a council which theoretically controls his power, but practically has no controlling influence whatever. The Consistorial council, which has in the theory of

* Známenski, "*Prikhódscoe Dukhovénstvo v Rossíi so vrémeni refórmý Petrú,*" Kazán, 1873.

ecclesiastical procedure a very imposing appearance, is in reality the bishop's *chancellerie*, and its members are little more than secretaries, whose chief object is to make themselves agreeable to their superior. And it must be confessed that so long as they remain what they are, the less power they possess, the better it will be for those who have the misfortune to be under their jurisdiction. The higher dignitaries have at least larger aims and a certain consciousness of the dignity of their position, but the lower officials, who have no such healthy restraints and receive ridiculously small salaries, grossly misuse the little authority which they possess, and habitually pilfer and extort in the most shameless manner. The Consistories are in fact what the public offices were in the time of Nicholas.

The ecclesiastical administration is entirely in the hands of the monks, or "Black Clergy," as they are commonly termed, who form a large and influential class.

The monks who first settled in Russia were, like those who first visited North-Western Europe, men of the earnest, ascetic, missionary type. Filled with zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, they took little or no thought for the morrow, and devoutly believed that their Heavenly Father, without whose knowledge no sparrow falls to the ground, would provide for their humble wants. Poor, clad in rags, eating the most simple fare, and ever ready to share what they had with any one poorer than themselves, they performed faithfully and earnestly the work which their Master had given them to do. But this ideal of monastic life soon gave way in Russia, as in the West, to practices less simple and severe. By the liberal donations and bequests of the faithful the monasteries became rich in gold, in silver, in precious stones, and above all in land and serfs. Troitsa, for instance, possessed at one time 120,000 serfs and a proportionate amount of land, and it is said that at the beginning of last century more than a fourth of the entire population had fallen under the jurisdiction of the Church. Many of the monasteries engaged in commerce, and the monks were, if we may credit Fletcher, who visited Russia in 1588, the most intelligent merchants of the country.

During last century the Church lands were secularized, and the serfs of the Church became serfs of the State. This was a severe blow for the monasteries, but it did not prove fatal, as many peo-

ple predicted. Some monasteries were abolished and others were reduced to extreme poverty, but many survived and prospered. These could no longer possess serfs, but they had still three sources of revenue : a limited amount of real property, Government subsidies, and the voluntary offerings of the faithful. At present there are about 500 monastic establishments, and the great majority of them, though not wealthy, have revenues more than sufficient to satisfy all the requirements of an ascetic life.

Thus in Russia, as in Western Europe, the history of monastic institutions is composed of three chapters, which may be briefly entitled : asceticism and missionary enterprise ; wealth, luxury, and corruption ; secularization of property and decline. But between Eastern and Western monasticism there is at least one marked difference. The monasticism of the West made at various epochs of its history a vigorous, spontaneous effort at self-regeneration, which found expression in the foundation of separate Orders, each of which proposed to itself some special aim—some special sphere of usefulness. In Russia we find no similar phenomenon. Here the monasteries never deviated from the rules of St. Basil, which restrict the members to religious ceremonies, prayer, and contemplation. From time to time a solitary individual raised his voice against the prevailing abuses, or retired from his monastery to spend the remainder of his days in ascetic solitude ; but neither in the monastic population as a whole, nor in any particular monastery, do we find at any time a spontaneous, vigorous movement toward reform. During the last two hundred years reforms have certainly been effected, but they have all been the work of the civil power, and in the realization of them the monks have shown little more than the virtue of resignation. Here, as elsewhere, we have evidence of that inertness, apathy, and want of spontaneous vigor which form one of the most characteristic traits of Russian national life. In this, as in other departments of national activity, the spring of action has lain not in the people but in the Government.

My personal acquaintance with the Russian monasteries is too slight to enable me to speak with authority regarding their actual condition, but I may say that during casual visits to some of them I have always been disagreeably impressed by the vulgar, commercial spirit which seemed to reign in the place. Several of them have appeared to me little better than houses of refuge for

the indolent, and I have had on more than one occasion good grounds for concluding that among monks, as among ordinary mortals, indolence leads to drunkenness and other vices.

If there is anything that may be called party-feeling in the Russian Church, it is the feeling of hostility which exists between the White and the Black Clergy—that is to say, between the parish priests and the monks. The parish priests consider it very hard that they should have nearly all the laborious duties and none of the honors of their profession. The monks, on the other hand, look on the parish priest as a kind of ecclesiastical half-caste, and think that he ought to obey his superiors without grumbling.

This antagonism, together with the general enthusiasm for every species of reform which has characterized the present reign, has produced a certain appearance of movement in the Russian clerical world, and has induced some sanguine persons, imbued with Western ideas, to believe that there is a movement in the deep waters, and that the Church is about to throw off her venerable lethargy. Such expectations cannot, I think, be entertained by any one who has studied carefully and dispassionately her past history and present condition. Anything at all resembling what we understand by a religious revival is in flagrant contradiction with all her traditions. Immobility and passive resistance to external influences have always been, and are still, her fundamental principles of conduct. She prides herself on being above terrestrial influences. During the last two centuries Russia has undergone an uninterrupted series of profound modifications—political, intellectual, and moral—but the spirit of the National Church has remained unchanged. The modifications that have been made in her administrative organization have not affected her inner nature. In spirit and character she is now what she was under the Patriarchs in the time of the Muscovite Tsars, holding fast to the promise that no jot or tittle shall pass from the law till all be fulfilled. To all that is said about the requirements of modern life and modern science she turns a deaf ear. Partly from the predominance which she gives to the ceremonial element, partly from the fact that her chief aim is to preserve unmodified the doctrine and ceremonial as determined by the early Ecumenical Councils, and partly from the low state of general culture among the clergy, she has ever remained outside of the intellectual movements. The attempts of the Roman Catholic

Church to develop the traditional dogmas by definition and deduction, and the efforts of the Protestant Churches to reconcile their teaching with progressive science and the ever-varying intellectual currents of the time, are alike foreign to her nature. Hence she has produced no profound theological treatises conceived in a philosophical spirit, and has made no attempt to combat the spirit of infidelity in its modern forms. Profoundly convinced that her position is impregnable, she has "let the nations rave," and scarcely deigned to cast a glance at their intellectual and religious struggles. In a word, she is "in the world, but not of it."

If we wish to see represented in a visible form the peculiar characteristics of the Russian Church, we have only to glance at Russian religious art, and compare it with that of Western Europe. In the West, from the time of the Renaissance downwards, religious art has kept pace with the intellectual development. Gradually it emancipated itself from archaic forms and childish symbolism, converted the lifeless typical figures into living individuals, lit up their dull eyes and expressionless faces with human intelligence and human feeling, and finally affected archæological accuracy in costume and other details. Thus in the West the Icon grew into the *tableau de genre*, and the practiced eye can at once decide to what period a religious picture belongs. In Russia, on the contrary, no such development has taken place in religious art. The old Byzantine forms have been faithfully and rigorously preserved, and we can see reflected in the Icons—stiff, archaic, expressionless—the immobility of the Eastern Church in general, and of the Russian Church in particular.

To the Roman Catholic, who struggles against science as soon as it contradicts traditional conceptions, and to the Protestant, who strives to bring his religious beliefs into accordance with his scientific knowledge, the Russian Church may seem to resemble an antediluvian petrification, or a cumbrous line-of-battle ship that has been long stranded—"stuck on a bank, and beaten by the flood." It must be confessed, however, that the serene inactivity for which she is distinguished has had very valuable practical consequences. The Russian clergy have neither that haughty, aggressive intolerance which characterizes their Roman Catholic brethren, nor that narrow-minded, bitter, uncharitable, sectarian spirit which is too often to be found among Protestants. They

allow not only to heretics, but also to members of their own communion, the most complete intellectual freedom, and never think of anathematizing any one for his scientific or unscientific opinions. All that they demand is that those who have been born within the pale of Orthodoxy should show the Church a certain nominal allegiance; and in this matter of allegiance they are by no means very exacting. So long as a member refrains from openly attacking the Church and from passing over to another confession, he may entirely neglect all religious ordinances and publicly profess scientific theories logically inconsistent with any kind of religious belief, without the slightest danger of incurring ecclesiastical censure. Until recently, it is true, all Orthodox Russians were obliged to communicate once a year, under pain of incurring various disagreeable consequences of a temporal nature; but this obligation proceeded in reality from the civil government, and the priests, in so far as they insisted on its fulfillment, were actuated by pecuniary rather than religious considerations. In short, if the Russian clergy has done little for the advancement of science and enlightenment, it has at least done nothing to suppress them; and that is, I fear, more than we can say of certain other priesthoods.

This apathetic tolerance may be partly explained by the national character, but it is at the same time to some extent due to the peculiar relations between Church and State. The Government vigilantly protects the Church from attack, and at the same time prevents her from attacking her enemies. Hence religious questions are never discussed in the press, and the ecclesiastical literature is all historical, homiletic, or devotional. The authorities allow public oral discussions to be held during Lent in the Kremlin of Moscow, between members of the State Church and Old Ritualists; but these debates are not theological in our sense of the term. They turn exclusively on details of Church History, and on the minutiae of ceremonial observance. The disputants discuss, for instance, the proper position of the fingers in making the sign of the cross, and found their arguments, not on Scripture, but on the ancient Icons, the decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, and the writings of the Greek Fathers.

Of late years there has been a good deal of vague talk about a possible union of the Russian and Anglican Churches. What the promoters of this scheme desire I do not profess to understand,

but I wish to make one remark on the subject. If by "union" is meant simply union in the bonds of brotherly love, there can be, of course, no objection to any amount of such *pia desideria*; but if anything more real and practical is intended, I may warn simple-minded, well-meaning people that the project is an absurdity. It is much to be regretted that the bold spirits who conceive such projects, and the fluent orators who discourse upon them, do not take a little trouble to acquaint themselves with facts. If they devoted a few weeks to a calm, conscientious study of the past history and present condition of the Eastern Church in its various sections, they would come to understand that a union of the Russian and Anglican Churches would be as difficult of realization and is as undesirable as a union of the Russian Council of State and the British House of Commons.*

* I suppose that the more serious partisans of the union scheme mean union with the Eastern Orthodox, and not with the Russian, Church. To them the above remarks are not addressed. Their scheme is in my opinion unrealizable and undesirable, but it contains nothing absurd.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE CRIMEAN WAR AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

The Great Fair at Nizhni—The Crimea—Sebastopol—The Emperor Nicholas and his System—The Men with Aspirations and the Apathetically Contented—National Humiliation—Popular Discontent and the Manuscript Literature—Death of Nicholas—Alexander II.—New Spirit—Reform Enthusiasm—Change in the Periodical Literature—The *Kólokol*—The Conservatives—The *Tchinóvniks*—First Specific Proposals—Joint-Stock Companies—The Serf Question comes to the front.

IN Russia, as in America, the traveler is always cross-questioned by new acquaintances as to what he thinks of the country, and when he has given his opinions on this point with more or less reservation, he is almost sure to be asked whether he has seen the great Fair of Nizhni-Novgorod and the south coast of the Crimea. If he cannot answer this question in the affirmative, he will be assured that he cannot form any adequate conception of the ethnographical variety and beautiful scenery which Russia contains.

During the first two years of my sojourn in Russia I was frequently compelled to make the humiliating confession that I had seen neither Nizhni* nor the Crimea, but in the course of the third year I succeeded in wiping out this stain on my character as a traveler. I went to the great fair—and was disappointed. All the descriptions of it which I have read are much too highly colored. "The motley crowd of Orientals, representing every country of the East," is not visible to the naked eye of a prosaic observer. A few Georgians, Persians, and Bokhariots may be seen sitting in their booths, or strolling about, but they are neither very picturesque nor very interesting in any way. There is a "Chinese Row," where tea is sold, and where the roofs of the booths show traces

* Nizhni (*i.e.*, Lower) Novgorod, situated on the Volga, was originally a Colony of Great Novgorod, which I have already described. In the word Nizhni, as elsewhere, I have used *zh* to represent the sound of the French *j*.

of the influence of pagoda architecture, but I found there no children of the Celestial Empire. As to the various kinds of merchandise, they may all be seen to much better advantage in the shops and bazaars of Moscow. Altogether I should advise the traveler not to go very far out of his way to visit this great annual gathering, which is commonly spoken of by Russians—especially by those of them who have never seen it—as if it were one of the seven wonders of the world.

With the Crimea, on the contrary, I was not at all disappointed. The south coast is of its kind one of the most beautiful bits of scenery in Europe. The traveler's opinion of it will depend, however, a good deal on the direction from which he comes. If he comes from the North, and has just undergone the tedium and monotony of a long journey over the bare Steppe, Crimean scenery will seem to him magnificent and grandiose; but if he comes direct from the Caucasus, it will probably seem to him diminutive and insignificant. In either case the tourist may—especially if he has a taste for archaeology—spend a few weeks very pleasantly in the mountainous region of the peninsula. For my own part, as I had just seen abundance of fine scenery in the Caucasus, and the season was already far advanced, I preferred devoting the time at my disposal to Sebastopol and its neighborhood, among the scenes that have been rendered familiar to every Englishman by the Crimean War.

At the time of my visit, in 1873, the town was still in pretty nearly the same dilapidated condition as when the Allies left it. The streets had, of course, been cleared, but the great majority of the houses were still roofless and in ruins, and there was a general air of desolation about the place, as if the siege had just been finished and the inhabitants had not yet had time to return to their homes. The Redan, the Malakoff, and the other fortifications on the land side had almost completely disappeared, but I could trace in many places the course of the trenches, and determined the position of many of the encampments by the remains of preserved-meat tins and broken beer-bottles.

The Russians frankly admit that they were beaten in the Crimean War, but they regard, and not without reason, the heroic defense of Sebastopol as one of the most glorious events in the military annals of their country. Nor do they altogether regret the result of the struggle. Often in a half-jocular, half-serious

tone they say that they have reason to be grateful to the Allies. And there is much truth in this paradoxical statement. The Crimean War inaugurated a new epoch in the national history. It gave the death-blow to the repressive system of the Emperor Nicholas, and produced an intellectual movement and a moral revival which led to gigantic results.

"The affair of December," 1825, to which I have already alluded, gave the key-note to Nicholas's reign. The armed attempt to overthrow the Imperial power, ending in the execution or exile of many young members of the first families, struck terror into the noblesse, and prepared the way for a period of repressive police administration. Nicholas had none of the moral limpness and vacillating character of his predecessor. His was one of those simple, vigorous, tenacious, straightforward natures—more frequently to be met with among the Teutonic than among the Slav races—whose conceptions are all founded on a few deep-rooted, semi-instinctive convictions, and who are utterly incapable of accommodating themselves with histrionic cleverness to the changes of external circumstances. From his early youth he had shown a strong liking for military discipline, and a decided repugnance to the humanitarianism and liberal principles then in fashion. With "the rights of man," "the spirit of the age," and similar philosophical abstractions, his strong, domineering nature had no sympathy; and for the vague, loud-sounding phrases of philosophic liberalism he had a most profound contempt. "Attend to your military duties," he was wont to say to his officers, before his accession; "don't trouble your heads with philosophy. I cannot bear philosophers!" The tragic event which formed the prelude to his reign naturally confirmed and fortified his previous convictions. The representatives of liberalism, who could talk so eloquently about duty in the abstract, had, whilst wearing the uniform of the Imperial Guard, openly disobeyed the repeated orders of their superior officers and attempted to shake the allegiance of the troops for the purpose of overthrowing the Imperial power! A man who was at once soldier and autocrat, by nature as well as by position, could of course admit no extenuating circumstances. The incident stereotyped his character for life, and made him the sworn enemy of liberalism and the fanatical defender of autocracy, not only in his own country, but throughout all Europe. In European politics he saw two forces struggling for mastery, monarchy and democ-

racy, which were in his opinion identical with order and anarchy; and he was always ready to assist his brother sovereigns in putting down democratic movements. In his own Empire he endeavored by every means in his power to prevent the introduction of the dangerous ideas. For this purpose a stringent intellectual quarantine was established on the western frontier. All foreign books and newspapers, except those of the most harmless kind, were rigorously excluded. Native writers were placed under strict supervision, and at once silenced as soon as they departed from what was considered a "well-intentioned" tone. The number of university students was diminished, the chairs for political science suppressed, and the military schools multiplied. Russians were prevented from traveling abroad, and foreigners who visited the country were closely watched by the police. By these and similar measures it was hoped that Russia would be preserved from the dangers of revolution.

Nicholas has been called the Don Quixote of Autocracy, and the comparison which the term implies is true in many points. By character and aims he belonged to a time that had long passed away; but failure and mishap could not shake his faith in his ideal, and made no change in his honest, stubborn nature, which was as loyal and chivalresque as that of the ill-fated knight of La Mancha. In spite of all evidence to the contrary, he believed in the practical omnipotence of autocracy. He imagined that as his authority was theoretically unlimited, so his power could work miracles. By nature and training a soldier, he considered government a slightly-modified form of military discipline, and looked on the nation as an army which might be made to perform any intellectual or economic evolutions that he might see fit to command. All social ills seemed to him the consequence of disobedience to his orders, and he knew only one remedy—more discipline. Any expression of doubt as to the wisdom of his policy, or any criticism of existing regulations, he treated as an act of insubordination which a wise sovereign ought not to tolerate. If he never said, "*P'État—c'est moi!*" it was because he considered the fact so self-evident that it did not need to be stated. Hence any attack on the administration, even in the person of the most insignificant official, was an attack on himself and on the monarchical principle which he represented. The people must believe—and faith, as we know, comes not by sight—that they lived

under the best possible government. To doubt of this was political heresy. An incautious word or a foolish joke against the Government was considered a serious crime, and might be punished by a long exile in some distant and inhospitable part of the Empire. Progress should by all means be made, but it must be made by word of command, and in the way ordered. Private initiative in any form was a thing not to be tolerated. Nicholas never suspected that a ruler, however well-intentioned, energetic, and legally autocratic he may be, can do but little without the co-operation of his people. Experience constantly showed him the fruitlessness of his efforts, but he paid no attention to its teachings. He had formed once for all his theory of government, and for thirty years he acted according to it with all the blindness and obstinacy of a reckless, fanatical doctrinaire. Even at the close of his reign, when the terrible logic of facts had proved his system to be a mistake—when his armies had been defeated, his best fleet destroyed, his ports blockaded, and his treasury well-nigh emptied—he could not recant. “My successor,” he is reported to have said on his death-bed, “may do as he pleases, but I cannot change.”

Had Nicholas lived in the old patriarchal times, when kings were the uncontrolled “shepherds of the people,” he would perhaps have been an admirable ruler; but in the nineteenth century he was a flagrant anachronism. His system of administration completely broke down. In vain he multiplied formalities and inspectors, and punished severely the few delinquents who happened by some accident to be brought to justice; the officials continued to pilfer, extort, and misgovern in every possible way. Though the country was reduced to what would be called in Europe “a state of siege,” the inhabitants might still have said—as they are reported to have declared a thousand years before—“Our land is great and fertile, but there is no order in it.”

In a nation accustomed to political life and to a certain amount of self-government, any approach to the system of Nicholas would, of course, have produced wide-spread dissatisfaction and violent hatred against the ruling power. But in Russia at that time no such feelings were awakened. The educated classes—and *a fortiori* the uneducated—were profoundly indifferent not only to political questions, but also to ordinary public affairs, whether local or Imperial, and were quite content to leave them in the

hands of those who were paid for attending to them. In common with the uneducated peasantry, they had a boundless respect—one might almost say a superstitious reverence—not only for the person but also for the will of the Tsar, and were ready to show unquestioning obedience to his commands, so long as these did not interfere with their accustomed mode of life. The Tsar desired them not to trouble their heads with political questions, and to leave all public matters to the care of the Administration; and in this respect the Imperial will coincided so well with their personal inclinations, that they had no difficulty in complying with it. When the Tsar ordered those of them who held office to refrain from extortion and peculation, his orders were not so punctiliously obeyed, but in this disobedience there was no open opposition—no assertion of a right to pilfer and extort. As the disobedience proceeded, not from a feeling of insubordination, but merely from the weakness that flesh is heir to, it was not regarded as very heinous. In the aristocratic circles of St. Petersburg and Moscow there was the same indifference to political questions and public affairs. All strove to have the reputation of being “well-intentioned,” which was the first requisite for those who desired Court favor or advancement in the service; and those whose attention was not entirely occupied with official duties, card-playing, and the ordinary routine of everyday life, cultivated *belles-lettres* or the fine arts. In short, the educated classes in Russia at that time showed a complete indifference to political and social questions, an apathetic acquiescence in the system of administration adopted by the Government, and an unreasoning contentment with the existing state of things.

About the year 1840 began to appear what may be called “the men with aspirations,” a little band of generous enthusiasts, strongly resembling the youth in Longfellow’s poem who carries a banner with the device “Exeelsior,” and strives ever to climb higher, without having any clear notion of where he is going to, or of what he is to do when he reaches the summit. At first they had little more than a sentimental enthusiasm for the true, the beautiful, and the good, and a certain Platonic love of free institutions, liberty, enlightenment, progress, and everything that was generally comprehended at that period under the term “liberal.” Gradually, under the influence of current French literature, their ideas became a little clearer, and they began to look on reality

around them with a critical eye. They could perceive, without much effort, the unrelenting tyranny of the Administration, the notorious venality of the tribunals, the reckless squandering of the public money, the miserable condition of the serfs, the systematic strangulation of all independent opinion or private initiative, and, above all, the profound apathy of the upper classes, who seemed quite content with things as they were. With such ugly facts staring them in the face, and with the habit of looking at things from the moral point of view, these men could understand how hollow and false were the soothing or triumphant phrases of official optimism. They did not, indeed, dare to express their indignation publicly, for the authorities would allow no public expression of dissatisfaction with the existing state of things, but they disseminated their ideas among their friends and acquaintances by means of conversation and manuscript literature, and some of them, as university professors and writers in the periodical press, contrived to awaken in a certain section of the young generation an ardent enthusiasm for enlightenment and progress, and a vague hope that a brighter day was about to dawn.

Not a few sympathized with these new conceptions and aspirations, but the great majority of the nobles regarded them—especially after the French Revolution of 1848—as revolutionary and dangerous. Thus the educated classes became divided into two sections, which have sometimes been called the Liberals and the Conservatives, but which might be more properly designated the men with aspirations and the apathetically contented. These latter doubtless felt occasionally the irksomeness of the existing system, but they had always one consolation: if they were oppressed at home they were feared abroad. The Tsar was at least a thorough soldier, possessing an enormous and well-equipped army by which he might at any moment impose his will on Europe. Ever since the glorious days of 1812, when Napoleon was forced to make an ignominious retreat from the ruins of Moscow, the belief that the Russian soldiers were superior to all others, and that the Russian army was irresistible, had become an article of the popular creed; and the respect which the voice of Nicholas commanded in Western Europe seemed to prove that the fact was admitted by foreign nations. In these and similar considerations the apathetically contented found a justification for their lethargy.

When it became evident that Russia was about to engage in a trial of strength with the Western Powers, this justification was very generally adopted. "The heavy burdens," it was said, "which the people have had to bear were necessary to make Russia the first military power in Europe, and now the nation will reap the fruits of its long-suffering and patient resignation. The West will learn that her boasted liberty and liberal institutions are of little service in the hour of danger, and the Russians who admire such institutions will be constrained to admit that a strong, all-directing autocracy is the only means of preserving national greatness." As the patriotic fervor and military enthusiasm increased, nothing was heard but praises of Nicholas and his system. The war was regarded by many as a kind of crusade—even the Emperor spoke about the defense of "the native soil and the holy faith"—and the most exaggerated expectations were entertained of its results. The old Eastern Question was at last to be solved in accordance with Russian aspirations, and Nicholas was about to realize Catherine II.'s grand scheme of driving the Turks out of Europe. The date at which the troops would arrive at Constantinople was actively discussed, and a Slavophil poet called on the Emperor to lie down in Constantinople, and rise up as Tsar of a Pan-slavonian Empire. Some enthusiasts even expected the speedy liberation of Jerusalem from the power of the Infidel. To the enemy, who might possibly hinder the accomplishment of these schemes, very little attention was paid. "We have only to throw our hats at them!" became a favorite expression.

There were, however, a few men in whom the prospect of the coming struggle awoke very different thoughts and feelings. They could not share the sanguine expectations of those who were confident of success. "What preparations have we made," they asked, "for the struggle with civilization, which now sends its forces against us? With all our vast territory and countless population we are incapable of coping with it. When we talk of the glorious campaigns against Napoleon, we forget that since that time Europe has been steadily advancing on the road of progress while we have been standing still. We march not to victory, but to defeat, and the only grain of consolation which we have is that Russia will learn by experience a lesson that will be of use to her in the future." *

* These are the words of Granófski.

These prophets of evil found, of course, few disciples, and were generally regarded as unworthy sons of the Fatherland—almost as traitors to their country. But their predictions were soon confirmed by events. The Allies were victorious in the Crimea, and even the despised Turks made a successful stand on the line of the Danube. In spite of the efforts of the Government to suppress all unpleasant intelligence, it soon became known that the military organization was little, if at all, better than the civil administration—that the individual bravery of soldiers and officers was neutralized by the incapacity of the generals, the venality of the officials, and the shameless peculation of the commissariat department. The Emperor, it was said, had drilled out of the officers their energy, individuality, and moral force. Almost the only men who showed judgment, decision, and energy were the officers of the Black Sea fleet, which had been less subjected to the prevailing system. As the struggle went on, it became evident how weak the country really was—how deficient in the resources necessary to maintain a prolonged conflict. “Another year of war,” writes an eye-witness in 1855, “and the whole of Southern Russia will be ruined.” To meet the extraordinary demands on the Treasury, recourse was had to an enormous issue of paper-money; but the rapid depreciation of the currency showed that this resource would be easily exhausted. Militia regiments were everywhere raised throughout the country, and many proprietors spent large sums in equipping volunteer corps; but very soon this enthusiasm cooled when it was found that the patriotic efforts enriched the jobbers without inflicting any serious injury on the enemy.

Under the sting of the great national humiliation, the upper classes awoke from their optimistic resignation. They had borne patiently the oppression of a semi-military administration, and for this! The system of Nicholas had been put to a crucial test, and found wanting. The policy which had sacrificed all to increase the military power of the Empire was seen to be a fatal error, and the worthlessness of the drill-sergeant régime was proved by bitter experience. Those administrative fetters which had for more than a quarter of a century cramped every spontaneous movement had failed to fulfill even the narrow purpose for which they had been forged. They had, indeed, secured a certain external tranquility during those troublous times when Europe

was convulsed by revolutionary agitation; but this tranquility was not that of healthy normal action, but of death—and underneath the surface lay secret and rapidly-spreading corruption. The army still possessed that dashing gallantry which it had displayed in the campaigns of Suvórof, that dogged, stoical bravery which had checked the advance of Napoleon on the field of Borodino, and that wondrous power of endurance which had often redeemed the negligence of generals and the defects of the commissariat; but the result was now not victory, but defeat. How could this be explained except by the radical defects of that system which had been long practiced with such inflexible perseverance? The Government had imagined that it could do everything by its own wisdom and energy, and in reality it had done nothing, or worse than nothing. The higher officers had learned only too well to be mere automatons; the ameliorations in the military organization, on which Nicholas had always bestowed special attention, were found to exist for the most part only in the official reports; the shameful exploits of the commissariat department were such as to excite the indignation of those who had long lived in an atmosphere of official jobbery and speculation; and the finances, which people had generally supposed to be in a highly-satisfactory condition, had become seriously crippled by the first great effort.

This deep and wide-spread dissatisfaction was not allowed to appear in the press, but it found very free expression in the manuscript literature and in conversation. In almost every house—I mean, of course, among the educated classes—words were spoken which a few months before would have seemed treasonable, if not blasphemous. Philippics and satires in prose and verse were written by the dozen, and circulated in hundreds of copies. A pasquil on the Commander-in-chief, or a tirade against the Government, was sure to be eagerly read and warmly approved of. As a specimen of this kind of literature, and an illustration of the public opinion of the time, I may translate here one of these metrical tirades. Though it was never printed, it obtained a wide circulation:—

“ ‘God has placed me over Russia,’ said the Tsar to us, ‘and you must bow down before me, for my throne is His altar. Trouble not yourselves with public affairs, for I think for you and watch over you every hour. My watchful eye detects internal

evils and the machinations of foreign enemies; and I have no need of counsel, for God inspires me with wisdom. Be proud, therefore, of being my slaves, O Russians, and regard my will as your law.'

"We listened to these words with deep reverence, and gave a tacit consent; and what was the result? Under mountains of official papers real interests were forgotten. The letter of the law was observed, but negligence and crime were allowed to go unpunished. While groveling in the dust before ministers and directors of departments, in the hope of receiving *Tchins* and decorations, the officials stole unblushingly; and theft became so common that he who stole the most was the most respected. The merits of officers were decided at reviews; and he who obtained the rank of General was supposed capable of becoming at once an able governor, an excellent engineer, or a most wise senator. Those who were appointed governors were for the most part genuine satraps, the scourges of the provinces intrusted to their care. The other offices were filled up with as little attention to the merits of the candidates. A stable-boy became Press-censor! an Imperial fool became admiral!! Kleinmichel became a count!!! In a word, the country was handed over to the tender mercies of a band of robbers.

"And what did we Russians do all this time?

"We Russians slept! With groans the peasant paid his yearly dues; with groans the proprietor mortgaged the second half of his estate; groaning, we all paid our heavy tribute to the officials. Occasionally, with a grave shaking of the head, we remarked in a whisper that it was a shame and a disgrace—that there was no justice in the courts—that millions were squandered on Imperial tours, kiosks, and pavilions—that everything was wrong; and then, with an easy conscience, we sat down to our rubber, praised Rachel, criticised the singing of Frezzolini, bowed low to venal magnates, and squabbled with each other for advancement in the very service which we so severely condemned. If we did not obtain the place we wished we retired to our ancestral estates, where we talked of the crops, fattened in indolence and gluttony, and lived a genuine animal life. If any one, amidst the general lethargy, suddenly called upon us to rise and fight for the truth and for Russia, how ridiculous did he appear! How cleverly the Pharisaical official ridiculed him, and how quickly the friends of

yesterday showed him the cold shoulder ! Under the anathema of public opinion, in some distant Siberian mine he recognized what a heinous sin it was to disturb the heavy sleep of apathetic slaves. Soon he was forgotten, or remembered as an unfortunate madman ; and the few who said, ‘ Perhaps after all he was right,’ hastened to add, ‘ but that is none of our business.’

“ But amidst all this we had at least one consolation, one thing to be proud of—the might of Russia in the assembly of kings. ‘ What need we care,’ we said, ‘ for the reproaches of foreign nations ? We are stronger than those who reproach us.’ And when at great reviews the stately regiments marched past with waving standards, glittering helmets, and sparkling bayonets, when we heard the loud hurrah with which the troops greeted the Emperor, then our hearts swelled with patriotic pride, and we were ready to repeat the words of the poet—

‘ Strong is our native country, and great the Russian Tsar.’

Then British statesmen, in company with the crowned conspirator of France, and with treacherous Austria, raised Western Europe against us, but we laughed scornfully at the coming storm. ‘ Let the nations rave,’ we said ; ‘ we have no cause to be afraid. The Tsar doubtless foresaw all, and has long since made the necessary preparations.’ Boldly we went forth to fight, and confidently awaited the moment of the struggle.

“ And lo ! after all our boasting we were taken by surprise, and caught unawares, as by a robber in the dark. The sleep of innate stupidity blinded our Ambassadors, and our Foreign Minister sold us to our enemies.* Where were our millions of soldiers ? Where was the well-considered plan of defense ? One courier brought the order to advance ; another brought the order to retreat ; and the army wandered about without definite aim or purpose. With loss and shame we retreated from the forts of Silistria, and the pride of Russia was humbled before the Hapsburg eagle. The soldiers fought well, but the parade-admiral (Menshikof)—the amphibious hero of lost battles—did not know the geography of his own country, and sent his troops to certain destruction.

“ Awake, O Russia ! Devoured by foreign enemies, crushed by slavery, shamefully oppressed by stupid authorities and spies,

* Many people at that time imagined that Count Nesselrode, who was then Minister for Foreign Affairs, was a traitor to his adopted country.

awaken from your long sleep of ignorance and apathy ! You have been long enough held in bondage by the successors of the Tartar Khan. Stand forward calmly before the throne of the despot, and demand from him an account of the national disaster. Say to him boldly that his throne is not the altar of God, and that God did not condemn us to be slaves. Russia intrusted to you, O Tsar, the supreme power, and you were as a God upon earth. And what have you done ? Blinded by ignorance and passion you have lusted after power and have forgotten Russia. You have spent your life in reviewing troops, in modifying uniforms, and in appending your signature to the legislative projects of ignorant charlatans. You created the despicable race of Press-censors, in order to sleep in peace—in order not to know the wants and not to hear the groans of the people—in order not to listen to Truth. You buried Truth, rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher, placed a strong guard over it, and said in the pride of your heart : For her there is no resurrection ! But the third day has dawned, and Truth has arisen from the dead.

“Stand forward, O Tsar, before the judgment-seat of history and of God ! You have mercilessly trampled Truth under foot, you have denied Freedom, you have been the slave of your own passions. By your pride and obstinacy you have exhausted Russia and raised the world in arms against us. Bow down before your brethren and humble yourself in the dust ! Crave pardon and ask advice ! Throw yourself into the arms of the people ! There is now no other salvation !”

The innumerable tirades of which the above is a fair specimen were not very remarkable for literary merit or political wisdom. For the most part they were simply bits of bombastic rhetoric couched in doggerel rhyme, and they have consequently been long since consigned to well-merited oblivion—so completely that it is now difficult to obtain copies of them.* They have, however, an historical interest, because they express in a more or less exaggerated form the public opinion and prevalent ideas of the educated classes at that moment. In order to comprehend their real significance, we must remember that the writers and readers were not a band of conspirators, but ordinary, respectable, well-intentioned

* I am indebted for the copies which I possess to friends who copied and collected these pamphlets at the time.

people, who never for a moment dreamed of embarking in revolutionary designs. It was the same society that had been a few months before so indifferent to all political questions, and even now there was no intention of putting the loud-sounding phrases into action. We can imagine the comical discomfiture of those who read and listened to these appeals, if the "despot" had obeyed their summons, and suddenly appeared before them. How they would have instantly changed their tone, and assured the august accused that they had no intention of curbing his power, that they had merely given way to a momentary impulse of patriotic indignation, that they were perfectly loyal subjects, and that they did not really intend to do anything contrary to his will !

Was the movement, then, merely an outburst of childish petulance ? Certainly not. The public were really and seriously convinced that things were all wrong, and they were seriously and enthusiastically desirous that a new and better order of things should be introduced. It must be said to their honor that they did not content themselves with accusing and lampooning the individuals who were supposed to be the chief culprits. On the contrary, they looked reality boldly in the face, made a public confession of their past sins, sought conscientiously the causes which had produced the recent disasters, and endeavored to find means by which such calamities might be prevented in the future. The public feeling and aspirations were not strong enough to conquer the traditional respect for the Imperial will and create an open opposition to the autocratic power, but they were strong enough to do great things by aiding the Government, if the Emperor voluntarily undertook a series of radical reforms.

What Nicholas would have done, had he lived, in face of this national awakening, it is difficult to say. He declared indeed that he could not change, and we can readily believe that his proud spirit would have scorned to make concessions to the principles which he had always condemned ; but he gave decided indications in the last days of his life that his old faith in his system was somewhat shaken, and he did not exhort his son to persevere in the path along which he himself had forced his way with such obstinate consistency. It is useless, however, to speculate on possibilities. Whilst the Government had still to concentrate all its energies on the defense of the country, and had no time to

undertake internal reforms, the Iron Tsar died, and was succeeded by his son, a man of a very different type.

Of a kind-hearted, humane disposition, sincerely desirous of maintaining the national honor, but singularly free from military ambition and imbued with no fanatical belief in the drill-sergeant system of government, Alexander II. was by no means insensible to the spirit of the time. He was well aware of the existing abuses, many of which had been partially concealed from his father, and he had seen how fruitless were the attempts to eradicate them by a mere repressive system of administration. As heir-apparent he had taken no prominent part in public affairs, and was consequently in no way bound by antecedents. He had, however, none of the sentimental enthusiasm for liberal institutions which had characterized his uncle, Alexander I. On the contrary, he had inherited from his father a strong dislike to sentimentalism and rhetoric of all kinds. This dislike, joined to a goodly portion of sober common sense, a limited confidence in his own judgment, and a consciousness of enormous responsibility, prevented him from being carried away by the prevailing excitement. With all that was generous and humane in the movement he thoroughly sympathized, and he allowed the popular ideas and aspirations to find free utterance, but he did not at once commit himself to any definite policy, and carefully refrained from all exaggerated expressions of reforming zeal.

As soon, however, as peace had been concluded, there were unmistakable symptoms that the rigorously repressive system of Nicholas was about to be abandoned. In the manifesto announcing the termination of hostilities the Emperor expressed his conviction that, *by the combined efforts of the Government and the people*, the public administration would be improved, and that justice and mercy would reign in the courts of law. Apparently as a preparation for this great work, to be undertaken by the Tsar and his people in common, the ministers began to take the public into their confidence, and submitted to public criticism many official data which had hitherto been regarded as State secrets. The Minister of the Interior, for instance, in his annual report, spoke almost in the tone of a penitent, and confessed openly that the morality of the officials under his orders left much to be desired. He declared that the Emperor now showed a paternal confidence in his people, and as a proof of this mentioned the

significant fact that 9,000 persons had been liberated from police supervision. The other branches of the Administration underwent a similar transformation. The haughty, dictatorial tone which had hitherto been used by superiors to their subordinates and by all ranks of officials to the public, was replaced by one of considerate politeness. About the same time those of the Decembrists who were still alive were pardoned. The restrictions regarding the number of students in each university were abolished, the difficulty of obtaining foreign passports was removed, and the Press-censure became singularly indulgent. Though no decided change had been made in the laws, it was universally felt that the spirit of Nicholas was no more.

The public, anxiously seeking after a sign, readily took these symptoms of change as a complete confirmation of their ardent hopes, and leaped at once to the conclusion that a vast, all-embracing system of radical reform was about to be undertaken—not secretly by the Administration, as had been the custom in the preceding reign when any little changes had to be made, but publicly, by the Government and the people in common. “The heart trembles with joy,” said one of the leading organs of the press, “in expectation of the great social reforms that are about to be effected—reforms that are thoroughly in accordance with the spirit, the wishes, and the expectations of the public.” “The old harmony and community of feeling,” said another, “which has always existed between the Government and the people, except during short, exceptional periods, has been fully re-established. The absence of all sentiment of caste, and the feeling of common origin and brotherhood which binds all classes of the Russian people into a homogeneous whole, will enable Russia to accomplish peacefully and without effort not only those great reforms which cost Europe centuries of struggle and bloodshed, but also many which the nations of the West are still unable to accomplish, in consequence of feudal traditions and caste prejudices.” The past was depicted in the blackest colors, and the nation was called upon to begin a new and glorious epoch of its history. “We have to struggle,” it was said, “in the name of the highest truth against egotism and the puny interests of the moment; and we ought to prepare our children from their infancy to take part in that struggle which awaits every honest man. We have to thank the war for opening our eyes to the dark sides of our political and

social organization, and it is now our duty to profit by the lesson. But it must not be supposed that the Government can, single-handed, remedy the defects. The destinies of Russia are, as it were, a stranded vessel which the captain and crew cannot move, and which nothing but the rising tide of the national life can raise and float." Hearts beat quicker at the sound of these calls to action. Many heard this new teaching, if we may believe a contemporary authority, "with tears in their eyes;" then "raising boldly their heads, they made a solemn vow that they would act honorably, perseveringly, fearlessly." Some of those who had formerly yielded to the force of circumstances now confessed their misdemeanors with bitterness of heart. "Tears of repentance," said a popular poet, "give relief, and call us to new exploits." Russia was compared to a strong giant who awakes from sleep, stretches his brawny limbs, collects his thoughts, and prepares to atone for his long inactivity by feats of untold prowess. All believed, or at least assumed, that the recognition of defects would necessarily entail their removal. When an actor in one of the St. Petersburg theaters shouted from the stage, "Let us proclaim throughout all Russia that the time has come for tearing up evil by the roots!" the audience gave way to the most frantic enthusiasm. "Altogether a joyful time," says one who took part in the excitement, "as when, after the long winter, the genial breath of spring glides over the cold, petrified earth, and nature awakens from her deathlike sleep. Speech, that was long restrained by police and censorial regulations, now flows smoothly, harmoniously, majestically, like a mighty river that has just been freed from ice."

Under these influences a multitude of newspapers and periodicals were founded, and the current literature entirely changed its character. The purely literary and historical questions which had hitherto engaged the attention of the reading public were thrown aside and forgotten, unless they could be made to illustrate some principle of political or social science. Criticisms on style and diction, explanations of æsthetic principles, metaphysical discussions—all this seemed miserable trifling to men who wished to devote themselves to gigantic practical interests. "Science," it was said, "has now descended from the heights of philosophic abstraction into the arena of real life." The periodicals were accordingly filled with articles on railways, banks, free-trade, education, agriculture, communal institutions, local self-government,

joint-stock companies, and with crushing philippics against personal and national vanity, inordinate luxury, administrative tyranny, and the habitual peculation of the officials. This last-named subject received special attention. During the preceding reign any attempt to criticise publicly the character or acts of an official was regarded as a very heinous offense; now there was a deluge of sketches, tales, comedies, and monologues, describing the corruption of the Administration, and explaining the ingenious devices by which the *Tchinóvniks* increased their scanty salaries. The public would read nothing that had not a direct or indirect bearing on the questions of the day, and whatever had such a bearing was read with interest. It did not seem at all strange that a drama should be written in defense of free-trade, or a poem in defense of some peculiar mode of taxation; that an author should expound his political ideas in a tale, and his antagonist reply by a comedy. A few men of the old school protested feebly against this "prostitution of art," but they received little attention, and the doctrine that art should be cultivated for its own sake was scouted as an invention of aristocratic indolence. Here is an *ipsa pinxit* of the literature of the time:—"Literature has come to look at Russia with her own eyes, and sees that the idyllic romantic personages which the poets formerly loved to describe have no objective existence. Having taken off her French glove, she offers her hand to the rude, hard-working laborer, and observing lovingly Russian village life, she feels herself in her native land. The writers of the present have analyzed the past, and, having separated themselves from aristocratic *littérateurs* and aristocratic society, have demolished their former idols."

By far the most influential periodical at the commencement of the movement was the *Kólokol*, or *Bell*, a fortnightly journal published in London by Herzen, who was at that time an important personage among the political refugees. Herzen was a man of education and culture, with ultra-radical opinions, and not averse to using revolutionary methods of reform when he considered them necessary. His intimate relations with many of the leading men in Russia enabled him to obtain secret information of the most important and varied kind, and his sparkling wit, biting satire, and clear, terse, brilliant style secured him a large number of readers. He seemed to know everything that was done in the

ministries and even in the cabinet of the Emperor,* and he exposed most mercilessly every abuse that came to his knowledge. We who are accustomed to free political discussion can hardly form a conception of the avidity with which his articles were read, and the effect which they produced. Though strictly prohibited by the Press-censure, the *Kólokól* found its way across the frontier in thousands of copies, and was eagerly perused and commented on by all ranks of the educated classes. The Emperor himself received it regularly, and high-placed delinquents examined it with fear and trembling. In this way Herzen was for some years a power in Russia, and did much to awaken and keep up the reform enthusiasm.

But where were the Conservatives all this time? How came it that for two or three years no voice was raised and no protest made even against the rhetorical exaggerations of the new-born liberalism? Where were the representatives of the old régime, who had been so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Nicholas? Where were those ministers who had systematically extinguished the least indication of private initiative, those "Satraps" who had stamped out the least symptom of insubordination or discontent, those Press-censors who had diligently suppressed the least expression of liberal opinion, those thousands of well-intentioned proprietors who had regarded as dangerous freethinkers and treasonable republicans all who ventured to express dissatisfaction with the existing state of things? A short time before, the Conservatives composed at least nine-tenths of the upper classes, and now they had disappeared as if by the stroke of a magician's wand!

It is scarcely necessary to say that in a country accustomed to political life such a sudden, unopposed revolution in public opinion could not possibly take place. The key to the mystery lies in the fact that for centuries Russia had known nothing of political life or political parties. Those who were sometimes

* As an illustration of this, the following anecdote is told:—One number of the *Kólokól* contained a violent attack on an important personage of the court, and the accused, or some one of his friends, considered it advisable to have a copy specially printed for the Emperor without the objectionable article. The Emperor did not at first discover the trick, but shortly afterwards he received from London a polite note containing the article which had been omitted, and informing him how he had been deceived.

called Conservatives were in reality not at all Conservatives in our sense of the term. If we say that they had a certain amount of Conservatism, we must add that it was of the latent, passive, unreasoned kind—the fruit of indolence and apathy. Their political creed had but one article: Thou shalt love the Tsar with all thy might, and carefully abstain from all resistance to his will—especially when it happens that the Tsar is a man of the Nicholas type. So long as Nicholas lived they had passively acquiesced in his system—active acquiescence had been neither demanded nor desired—but when the Iron Tsar died, the system of which he was the soul necessarily died with him. What then could they seek to defend? They were told that that system which they had been taught to regard as the sheet-anchor of the State was in reality the chief cause of the national disasters; and to this they could make no reply, because they had no better explanation of their own to offer. They were convinced that the Russian soldier was the best soldier in the world, and they knew that in the recent war the army had not been victorious; the system, therefore, must be to blame. They were told that a series of gigantic reforms was necessary in order to restore Russia to her proper place among the nations; and to this they could make no answer, for they had never studied such abstract questions. And one thing they did know: that those who hesitated to admit the necessity of gigantic reforms were branded by the Press as ignorant, narrow-minded, prejudiced, and egotistical, and were held up to derision as men who did not know the most elementary principles of political and economic science. Freely-expressed public opinion was such a new phenomenon in Russia that the Press was able for some time to exercise a “Liberal” tyranny scarcely less severe than the “Conservative” tyranny of the censors in the preceding reign. Men who would have stood fire gallantly on the field of battle quailed before the poisoned darts of Herzen in the *Kólokol*. Under such circumstances, even the few who possessed some vague Conservative convictions refrained from publicly expressing them.

The men who had played a more or less active part during the preceding reign, and who might, therefore, be expected to have clearer and deeper convictions, were specially incapable of offering opposition to the prevailing Liberal enthusiasm. Their Conservatism was of quite as limp a kind as that of the landed proprietors

who were not in the public service, for under Nicholas the higher a man was placed, the less likely was he to have political convictions of any kind outside the simple political creed above referred to. Besides this, they belonged to that class which was for the moment under the anathema of public opinion, and they had drawn direct personal advantage from the system which was now recognized as the chief cause of the national disasters. For a time the name of "*Tchinóvnik*" became a term of reproach and derision, and the position of those who bore it was comically painful. They habitually strove to prove that, though they held a post in the public service, they were entirely free from the *Tchinóvnik* spirit—that there was nothing of the genuine *Tchinóvnik* about them. Those who had formerly paraded their "*Tchin*" (official rank) on all occasions, in season and out of season, became half ashamed to admit that they had the rank of General, for the title no longer commanded respect, and had become associated with all that was antiquated, formal, and stupid. Among the young generation it was used most disrespectfully as equivalent to "pompous blockhead." Zealous officials who had lately regarded the acquisition of Stars and Orders as among the chief ends of man, were fain to conceal those hard-won trophies lest some cynical "*Liberal*" might notice them, and make them the butt of his satire. "Look at the depth of humiliation to which you have brought the country"—such was the chorus of reproach that was ever ringing in their ears—"with your red tape, your Chinese formalism, and your principle of lifeless, unreasoning, mechanical obedience! You asserted constantly that you were the only true patriots, and branded with the name of traitor those who warned you of the insane folly of your conduct. You see now what it has all come to. The men whom you helped to send to the mines turn out to have been the true patriots."* And to these reproaches what could they reply? Like a child who has in his frolics inadvertently set the house on fire, they could only look contrite, and say they did not mean it. They had simply ac-

* It was a common saying at that time that nearly all the best men in Russia had spent a part of their lives in Siberia, and it was proposed to publish a biographical dictionary of remarkable men, in which every article was to end thus: "Exiled to — in 18—." I am not aware how far the project was seriously entertained, but, of course, the book was never published.

cepted without criticism the existing order of things, and ranged themselves among those who were officially recognized as "the well-intentioned." If they had always avoided, and perhaps had a hand in persecuting, the Liberals, it was simply because all "well-intentioned" people said that Liberals were "restless" and dangerous to the State. Those who were not convinced of their errors simply kept silence, but the great majority passed over to the ranks of the Progressists, and many endeavored to redeem their past by showing extreme zeal for the Liberal cause.

In explanation of this extraordinary outburst of reform enthusiasm, we must further remember that the Russian educated classes, in spite of the severe northern climate which is supposed to make the blood circulate slowly, are extremely impulsive. They are fettered by no venerable historical prejudices, and are wonderfully sensitive to the seductive influence of grandiose projects, especially when these excite the patriotic feelings. Then there was the simple force of reaction—the rebound which naturally followed the terrific compression of the preceding reign. Without disrespect, the Russians at the commencement of the present reign may be compared to school-boys who have just escaped from the rigorous discipline of a severe schoolmaster. In the first moments of freedom it was supposed that there would be no more discipline or compulsion. The utmost respect was to be shown to "human dignity," and every Russian was to act spontaneously and zealously at the great work of national regeneration. All thirsted for reforming activity. The men in authority were inundated with projects of reform—some of them anonymous, and others from obscure individuals; some of them practical, and very many wildly fantastic. Even the grammarians showed their sympathy with the spirit of the time by proposing to expel summarily all redundant letters from the Russian alphabet!

The fact that very few people had clear, precise ideas as to what was to be done did not prevent, but rather tended to increase, the reform enthusiasm. All had at least one common feeling—dislike to what had previously existed. It was only when it became necessary to forsake pure negation, and to create something, that the conceptions became clearer, and a variety of opinions appeared. At the first moment there was merely unanimity in negation, and an impulsive enthusiasm for beneficent reforms in general.

The first specific proposals were direct deductions from the lessons taught by the war. The war had shown in a terrible way the disastrous consequences of having merely primitive means of communication ; the Press and the public began, accordingly, to speak about the necessity of constructing railways, roads, and river-steamers. The war had shown that a country which has not developed its natural resources very soon becomes exhausted if it has to make a great national effort ; accordingly the public and the Press talked about the necessity of developing the natural resources, and about the means by which this desirable end might be attained. It had been shown by the war that a system of education which tends to make men mere apathetic automatons cannot produce even a good army ; accordingly the public and the Press began to discuss the different systems of education and the numerous questions of pedagogical science. It had been shown by the war that the best intentions of a government will necessarily be frustrated if the majority of the officials are dishonest or incapable ; accordingly the public and the Press began to speak about the paramount necessity of reforming the Administration in all its branches.

It must not, however, be supposed that in thus laying to heart the lessons taught by the war and endeavoring to profit by them, the Russians were actuated by warlike feelings, and desired to avenge themselves as soon as possible on their victorious enemies. On the contrary, the whole movement and the spirit which animated it were eminently pacific. Prince Gortchakof's saying, "*La Russie ne boude pas, elle se recueille,*" was more than a diplomatic repartee—it was a true and graphic statement of the case. Though the Russians are very inflammable, and can be very violent when their patriotic feelings are aroused, they are, individually and as a nation, singularly free from rancor and the spirit of revenge. After the termination of hostilities they really bore little malice towards the Western Powers, except, perhaps, towards Austria, which was believed to have been treacherous and ungrateful to the country that had saved her in 1849. Their patriotism now took the form, not of revenge, but of a desire to raise their country to the level of the Western nations. If they thought of military matters at all, they assumed that military power would be obtained as a natural and inevitable result of high civilization and good government.

As a first step towards the realization of the vast schemes contemplated, voluntary associations began to be formed for industrial and commercial purposes, and a law was issued for the creation of limited liability companies. In the space of two years, forty-seven companies of this kind were formed, with a combined capital of 358 millions of roubles. To understand the full significance of these figures, we must know that from the founding of the first joint-stock company in 1799 down to 1853, only twenty-six companies had been formed, and their united capital amounted only to thirty-two millions of roubles. Thus, in the space of two years (1857-58), eleven times as much capital was subscribed to joint-stock companies as had been subscribed during half a century previous to the commencement of the present reign. The most exaggerated expectations were entertained as to the national and private advantages which must necessarily result from these undertakings, and it became a patriotic duty to subscribe liberally. The periodical literature depicted in glowing terms the marvelous results that had been obtained in other countries by the principle of co-operation, and sanguine, credulous readers believed that they had discovered a patriotic way of speedily becoming rich.

These were, however, mere secondary matters, and the public were anxiously waiting for the Government to begin the grand reforming campaign. When the educated classes first awoke to the necessity of great reforms, there was no clear conception as to where the great work should be commenced. There was so much to be done that it was no easy matter to decide what should be done first. Administrative, judicial, social, economic, financial, and political reforms seemed all equally pressing. Gradually, however, it became evident that precedence must be given to the question of serfage. It was absurd to speak about progress, humanitarianism, education, self-government, equality in the eye of the law, and similar matters, so long as a third of the population was subjected to the arbitrary will of the landed proprietors. So long as serfage existed it was mere mockery to talk about reorganizing Russia according to the latest results of political and social science. How could a system of even-handed justice be introduced when twenty millions of the population were beyond the pale of the law? How could agricultural or industrial progress be made without free labor? How could the Government take active measures for the spread of national education when it had

no direct control over one-half of the peasantry? Above all, how could it be hoped that a great moral regeneration could take place, so long as the nation voluntarily retained the stigma of serfage and slavery?

All this was very generally felt by the educated classes, but no one ventured to raise the question until it should be known what were the views of the Emperor on the subject. How the question was gradually raised, how it was treated by the nobles, and how it was ultimately solved by the famous law of February 19th (March 3rd),* I now propose to relate.

* February 19th according to the old style, which is still used in Russia, and March 3rd according to our method of reckoning.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE SERFS.

The Rural Population in Ancient Times—The Peasantry in the Eighteenth Century—How was this Change effected?—The Common Explanation is Inaccurate—Serfage the Result of Permanent Economic and Political Causes—Origin of the *Adscriptio Glebæ*—Its Consequences—Serf Insurrection—Turning-point in the History of Serfage—Serfage in Russia and in Western Europe—State Peasants—Numbers and Geographical Distribution of the Serf Population—Serf Dues—Legal and Actual Power of the Proprietors—The Serfs' Means of Defense—Fugitives—Domestic Serfs—Moral Influence of Serfage.

BEFORE proceeding to describe the Emancipation, it may be well to explain briefly how the Russian peasants became serfs, and what serfage in Russia really was.

In the earliest period of Russian history the rural population was composed of three distinct classes. At the bottom of the scale stood the slaves, who were very numerous. Their numbers were continually augmented by prisoners of war, by freemen who voluntarily sold themselves as slaves, by insolvent debtors, and by certain categories of criminals. Immediately above the slaves were the free agricultural laborers, who had no permanent domicile, but wandered about the country and settled temporarily where they happened to find work and satisfactory remuneration. In the third place, distinct from these two classes, and in some respects higher in the social scale, were the peasants properly so called.*

These peasants proper, who may be roughly described as small farmers or cottiers, were distinguished from the free agricultural

* My chief authority for the early history of the peasantry has been Bêlâief, "*Krestyâné na Rusí*," Moscow, 1860; a most able and conscientious work. By the recent death of M. Bêlâief, Russia has lost one of her most learned and laborious historical investigators.

laborers in two respects : they were possessors of land in property or usufruct, and they were members of a rural Commune. The Communes were free primitive corporations which elected their office-bearers from among the heads of families, and sent delegates to act as judges or assessors in the Prince's Court. Some of the Communes possessed land of their own, whilst others were settled on the estates of the landed proprietors or on the extensive domains of the monasteries. In the latter case the peasant paid a fixed yearly rent in money, in produce, or in labor, according to the terms of his contract with the proprietor of the monastery ; but he did not thereby sacrifice in any way his personal liberty. As soon as he had fulfilled the engagements stipulated in the contract and settled accounts with the owner of the land, he was free to change his domicile as he pleased.

If we turn now from these early times to the eighteenth century, we find that the position of the rural population has entirely changed in the interval. The distinction between slaves, agricultural laborers, and peasants has completely disappeared. All three categories have melted together into a common class, called serfs, who are regarded as the property of the landed proprietors or of the State. "The proprietors sell their peasants and domestic servants not even in families, but one by one, like cattle, as is done nowhere else in the whole world, from which practice there is not a little wailing,"* And yet the Government, whilst professing to regret the existence of the practice, takes no energetic measures to prevent it. On the contrary, it deprives the serfs of all legal protection, and expressly commands that if any serf shall dare to present a petition against his master, he shall be punished with the knout and transported for life to the mines of Nertchinsk. (Ukáze of August 22nd, 1767.†)

How did this important change take place, and how is it to be explained ?

If we ask any educated Russian who has never specially occu-

* These words are taken from an Imperial ukáze of April 15th, 1721. *Pólnoe Sobránie Zakonów*, No. 3,770.

† This is an ukáze of the liberal and humane Catherine ! How she reconciled it with her respect and admiration for Beccari's humane views on criminal law she does not explain, and in her eloquent descriptions of the amazing progress of civilization in her Empire she forgets to mention it.

pied himself with historical investigations regarding the origin of serfage in Russia, he will probably reply somewhat in this fashion : "In Russia slavery has never existed (!), and even serfage in the West-European sense has never been recognized by law ! In ancient times the rural population was completely free, and every peasant might change his domicile on St. George's Day—that is to say, at the end of the agricultural year. This right of migration was abolished by Tsar Boris Godunóf—who, by the way, was half a Tartar and more than half a usurper—and herein lies the essence of serfage in the Russian sense. The peasants have never been the property of the landed proprietors, but have always been personally free ; and the only legal restriction on their liberty was that they were not allowed to change their domicile without the permission of the proprietor. If so-called serfs were sometimes sold, the practice was simply an abuse not justified by legislation."

This simple explanation, in which may be detected a note of patriotic pride, is almost universally accepted in Russia ; but it contains, like most popular conceptions of the distant past, a curious mixture of fact and fiction. Recent serious investigations tend to show that the power of the proprietors over the peasants came into existence, not suddenly, as the result of an ukáze, but gradually, as a consequence of permanent economic and political causes, and that Boris Godunóf was not more to blame than many of his predecessors and successors.*

Although the peasants in ancient Russia were free to wander about as they chose, there appeared at a very early period—long before the reign of Boris Godunóf—a decided tendency in the Princes, in the proprietors, and in the Communes to prevent migration. This tendency will be easily understood if we remember that land without laborers is useless, and that in Russia at that time the population was small in comparison with the amount of reclaimed and easily reclaimable land. The Prince desired to have as many inhabitants as possible in his principality, because the amount of his regular revenues depended on the number of the population. The landed proprietor desired to have as many peasants as possible on his estate, to till for him the land which he

* See especially Pobédonóstsef, in the *Rússki Vyéstnik*, 1858, No. 11, and "Istoritcheskiya izslédovaniya i statyi" (St. Petersburg, 1876), by the same author ; also Pogódin, in the *Rússkaya Beséda*, 1858, No. 4.

reserved for his own use, and to pay him for the remainder a yearly rent in money, produce, or labor. The free Communes desired to have a number of members sufficient to keep the whole of the Communal land under cultivation, because each Commune had to pay yearly to the Prince a fixed sum in money or agricultural produce, and the greater the number of able-bodied members the less each individual had to pay. To use the language of political economy, the Princes, the landed proprietors, and the free Communes all appeared as buyers in the labor market; and as the demand was far in excess of the supply, there was naturally a brisk competition. Nowadays when young colonies or landed proprietors in an outlying corner of the world are similarly in need of labor, they seek to supply the want by organizing a regular system of emigration—using illegal violent means, such as kidnapping expeditions, merely as an exceptional expedient. In old Russia regularly organized emigration was of course impossible, and consequently illegal or violent measures were not the exception but the rule. The chief practical advantage of the frequent military expeditions for those who took part in them was the acquisition of prisoners of war, who were commonly transformed into slaves by their captors. If it be true, as some assert, that only unbaptized prisoners were legally considered lawful booty, it is certain that in practice before the unification of the principalities under the Tsars of Moscow, little distinction was made in this respect between unbaptized foreigners and Orthodox Russians.* A similar method was sometimes employed for the acquisition of free peasants: the more powerful proprietors organized kidnapping expeditions, and carried off by force the peasants settled on the land of their weaker neighbors.

Under these circumstances it was only natural that those who possessed this valuable commodity should do all in their power to keep it. Many, if not all, of the free Communes adopted the simple measure of refusing to allow a member to depart until he had found some one to take his place. The proprietors never, so far as we know, laid down formally such a principle, but in practice they did all in their power to retain the peasants actually

* On this subject see Tchitchérin, "*Ópyty po istórii Rússkago práva*," Moscow, 1858, p. 163 *et seq.*; and Lokhvitski, "*Oplénnykh po drévnemu Rússkomu právu*," Moscow, 1855.

settled on their estates. For this purpose some simply employed force, whilst others acted under cover of legal formalities. The peasant who accepted land from a proprietor rarely brought with him the necessary implements, cattle, and capital to begin at once his occupations and to feed himself and his family till the ensuing harvest. He was obliged, therefore, to borrow from his landlord, and the debt thus contracted was easily converted into a means of preventing his departure if he wished to change his domicile. We need not enter into further details. The proprietors were the capitalists of the time. Frequent bad harvests, plagues, fires, military raids, and similar misfortunes often reduced even prosperous peasants to beggary. The *muzhik* was probably then, as now, only too ready to accept a loan without taking the necessary precautions for repaying it. The laws relating to debt were terribly severe, and there was no powerful judicial organization to protect the weak. If we remember all this we shall not be surprised to learn that a considerable part of the peasantry were practically serfs before serfage was recognized by law.

So long as the country was broken up into independent principalities, separated from each other by imaginary boundaries, and each landowner was almost an independent prince in his estate, the peasants easily found a remedy for these abuses in flight. They fled to a neighboring proprietor who could protect them from their former landlord and his claims, or they took refuge in a neighboring principality, where they were, of course, still safer. All this was changed when the independent principalities were transformed into the Tsardom of Muscovy. The Tsars had new reasons for opposing the migration of the peasants and new means for preventing it. The old Princes had simply given grants of land to those who served them, and left the grantee to do with his land what seemed good to him; the Tsars, on the contrary, gave to those who served them merely the usufruct of a certain quantity of land, and carefully proportioned the quantity to the rank and the obligations of the receiver. In this change there was plainly a new reason for fixing the peasants to the soil. The real value of a grant depended not so much on the amount of land as on the number of peasants settled on it, and hence any migration of the population was tantamount to a removal of the ancient landmarks—that is to say, to a disturbance of the arrangements made by the Tsar. Suppose, for instance, that the Tsar granted to a

Boyar or some lesser dignitary an estate on which were settled ten peasant families, and that afterwards five of these emigrated to neighboring proprietors. In this case the recipient might justly complain that he lost half of his estate—though the amount of land was in no way diminished—and that he was consequently unable to fulfill his obligations. Such complaints would be rarely, if ever, made by the great dignitaries, for they had the means of attracting peasants to their estates;* but the small proprietors had good reason to complain, and the Tsar was bound to remove their grievances. The attaching of the peasants to the soil was in fact the natural consequence of feudal tenures—an integral part of the Muscovite political system. The Tsar compelled the nobles to serve him, and was unable to pay them in money. He was obliged, therefore, to procure for them some other means of livelihood. Evidently the simplest method of solving the difficulty was to give them land, with a certain number of laborers—in other words, to introduce serfage.

Towards the free Communes the Tsars had to act in the same way for similar reasons. The Communes, like the nobles, had obligations to the Sovereign, and could not fulfill them if the peasants were allowed to migrate from one locality to another. They were, in a certain sense, the property of the Tsar, and it was only natural that the Tsar should do for himself what he had done for his nobles.

With these new reasons for fixing the peasants to the soil came, as has been said, new means of preventing migration. Formerly it was an easy matter to flee to a neighboring principality, but now all the principalities were combined under one ruler, and the foundations of a centralized administration were laid. Severe fugitive laws were issued against those who attempted to change their domicile and against the proprietors who should harbor the runaways. Unless the peasant chose to face the difficulties of "squatting" in the inhospitable northern forests, or resolved to

* In confirmation of this statement we have plain indications in the documents of the time that the great dignitaries were at first hostile to the *adscriptio glebæ*. We find a similar phenomenon at a much more recent date in Little Russia. Long after serfage had been legalized in that region by Catherine II., the great proprietors, such as Rumyantsef, Razumofski, Bezborodko, continued to attract to their estates the peasants of the smaller proprietors. See the article of Pogódin, in the *Rússkaya Beséda*, 1858, No. 4, p. 154.

brave the dangers of the steppe, he could nowhere escape the heavy hand of Moscow.*

The indirect consequences of thus attaching the peasants to the soil did not at once become apparent. The serf retained all the civil rights he had hitherto enjoyed, except that of changing his domicile. He could still appear before the courts of law as a free man, freely engage in trade or industry, enter into all manner of contracts, and rent land for cultivation.† Even the restriction on the liberty of his movements was not so burdensome as it may at first sight appear, for change of domicile had never been very frequent among the peasantry, and the force of custom prevented the proprietors for a time from making any important alterations in the existing contracts.

As time wore on, however, the change in the legal relation between the two classes became apparent in real life. In attaching the peasantry to the soil, the Government had been so thoroughly engrossed with the direct financial aim that it entirely overlooked, or willfully shut its eyes to, the ulterior consequences which must necessarily flow from the policy it adopted. It was evident that as soon as the relation between proprietor and peasant was removed from the region of voluntary contract by being rendered indissoluble, the weaker of the two parties legally tied together must fall completely under the power of the stronger unless energetically protected by the law and the Administration. And yet the Government paid no attention to this inevitable consequence. So far from endeavoring to protect the peasantry from the oppression of the proprietors, it did not even determine by law the mutual obligations which ought to exist between the two classes. Taking advantage of this omission, the proprietors soon began to impose whatever obligations they thought fit; and as

* The above account of the origin of serfage in Russia is founded on a careful examination of the evidence which we possess on the subject, but I must not conceal the fact that some of the statements are founded on inference rather than on direct, unequivocal documentary evidence. The whole question is one of great difficulty, and will in all probability not be satisfactorily solved until a large number of the old local Land-Registers (*Pistosriya Knigi*) have been published. Surely these registers are of more importance than many of the works published by the Imperial Archæographical Commission.

† Běláef, p. 250.

they had no legal means of enforcing fulfillment, they gradually introduced a patriarchal jurisdiction similar to that which they exercised over their slaves, with fines and corporal punishment as means of coercion. From this they ere long proceeded a step further, and began to sell their peasants without the land on which they were settled. At first this was merely a flagrant abuse unsanctioned by law, for the peasant had never been declared the private property of the landed proprietor; but the Government tacitly sanctioned the practice, and even exacted dues on such sales, as on the sale of slaves. Finally the right to sell peasants without land was formally recognized by various Imperial ukazes.*

The old Communal organization still existed, and had never been legally deprived of its authority, but it was now powerless to protect the members. The proprietor could easily overcome any active resistance by selling or converting into domestic servants the peasants who dared to oppose his will.

The peasantry had thus sunk to the condition of serfs, practically deprived of legal protection and subject to the arbitrary will of the proprietors; but they were still in some respects legally and actually distinguished from the slaves on the one hand and the "free wandering people" on the other. These distinctions were obliterated by Peter the Great and his immediate successors.

To effect his great civil and military reforms, Peter required an annual revenue such as his predecessors had never dreamed of, and he was consequently always on the look-out for some new object of taxation. When looking about for this purpose, his eye naturally fell on the slaves, the domestic servants, and the free agricultural laborers. None of these classes paid taxes—a fact which stood in flagrant contradiction with his fundamental principle of polity, that every subject should in some way serve the State. He caused, therefore, a national census to be taken, in which all the various classes of the rural population—slaves, domestic servants, agricultural laborers, peasants—should be inscribed in one category; and he imposed equally on all the members of this category a poll-tax, in lieu of the former land-tax, which had lain exclusively on the peasants. To facilitate the collection

* For instance, the ukazes of October 13th, 1675, and June 25th, 1682. See Bêlâief, pp. 203-209.

of this tax the proprietors were made responsible for their serfs; and the "free wandering people" who did not wish to enter the army were ordered, under pain of being sent to the galleys, to inscribe themselves as members of a Commune or as serfs to some proprietor.

These measures had a considerable influence, if not on the actual position of the peasantry, at least on the legal conceptions regarding them. By making the proprietor pay the poll-tax for his serfs, as if they were slaves or cattle, the law seemed to sanction the idea that they were part of his goods and chattels. Besides this, it introduced the entirely new principle that any member of the rural population not legally attached to the land or to a proprietor should be regarded as a vagrant, and treated accordingly. Thus the principle that every subject should in some way serve the State had found its complete realization. There was no longer any room in Russia for free men.

This change in the position of the peasantry, together with the hardships and oppression by which it was accompanied, naturally increased fugitivism and vagrancy. Thousands of serfs ran away from their masters, and fled to the steppe or sought enrollment in the army. To prevent this the Government considered it necessary to take severe and energetic measures. The serfs were forbidden to enlist without the permission of their masters, and those who persisted in presenting themselves for enrollment were to be beaten "cruelly" (*zhestóko*) with the knout, and sent to the mines.* The proprietors, on the other hand, received the right to transport without trial their unruly serfs to Siberia, and even to send them to the mines for life.†

If these stringent measures had any effect it was not of long duration, for there soon appeared among the serfs a still stronger spirit of discontent and insubordination, which threatened to produce a general agrarian rising, and actually did create a movement resembling in many respects the Jacquerie in France and the Peasant War in Germany. A glance at the causes of this movement will help us to understand the real nature of serfage in Russia.

Up to this point serfage had, in spite of its flagrant abuses, a

* Ukaz of June 2nd, 1742.

† See ukaz of January 17th, 1765, and of January 29th, 1766.

certain theoretical justification. It was, as we have seen, merely a part of a general political system in which obligatory service was imposed on all classes of the population. The serfs served the nobles in order that the nobles might serve the Tsar. In 1762 this theory was entirely overturned by a manifesto of Peter III. abolishing the obligatory service of the noblesse. According to strict justice this act ought to have been followed by the liberation of the serfs, for if the nobles were no longer obliged to serve the State they had no just claim to the service of the peasants. The Government had so completely forgotten the original meaning of serfage that it never thought of carrying out the measure to its logical consequences, but the peasantry held tenaciously to the ancient conceptions, and looked impatiently for a second manifesto liberating them from the power of the proprietors. Reports were spread that such a manifesto really existed, and was being concealed by the nobles. A spirit of insubordination accordingly appeared among the rural population, and local insurrections broke out in several parts of the Empire.

At this critical moment Peter III. was dethroned and assassinated by a Court conspiracy. The peasants, who of course knew nothing of the real motives of the conspirators, supposed that the Tsar had been assassinated by those who wished to preserve serfage, and believed him to be a martyr in the cause of Emancipation. At the news of the catastrophe their hopes of Emancipation fell, but soon they were revived by new rumors. The Tsar, it was said, had escaped from the conspirators and was in hiding. Soon he would appear among his faithful peasants, and with their aid would regain his throne and punish the wicked oppressors. Anxiously he was awaited, and at last the glad tidings came that he had appeared in the Don country, that thousands of Cossacks had joined his standard, that he was everywhere putting the proprietors to death without mercy, and that he would soon arrive in the ancient capital!

Peter III. was in reality in his grave, but there was a terrible element of truth in these reports. A pretender, a Cossack called Pugatchéf, had really appeared on the Don, and had assumed the rôle which the peasants expected the late Tsar to play. Advancing through the country of the Lower Volga, he took several places of importance, put to death all the proprietors he could find, defeated on more than one occasion the troops sent against

him, and threatened to advance into the heart of the Empire. It seemed as if the old troublous times were about to be renewed—as if the country was once more to be pillaged by those wild Cossacks of the southern steppe. But the pretender showed himself incapable of playing the part he had assumed. His inhuman cruelty estranged many who would have otherwise followed him, and he was too deficient in decision and energy to take advantage of favorable circumstances. If it be true that he conceived the idea of creating a peasant empire (*muzhítskoe tsársto*), he was not the man to realize such a scheme. After a series of mistakes and defeats he was taken prisoner and the insurrection was quelled.*

Meanwhile Peter III. had been succeeded by his consort, Catherine II. As she had no legal right to the throne, and was by birth a foreigner, she could not gain the affections of the people, and was obliged to court the favor of the noblesse. In such a difficult position she could not venture to apply her humane principles to the question of serfage. Even during the first years of her reign, when she had no reason to fear agrarian disturbances, she increased rather than diminished the power of the proprietors over their serfs, and the Pugatchéf affair confirmed her in this line of policy. During her reign serfage may be said to have reached its climax. The serfs were regarded by the law as part of the master's immovable property †—as part of the working capital of the estate—and as such they were bought, sold, and given as presents ‡ in hundreds and thousands, sometimes with the land, and sometimes without it, sometimes in families, and sometimes

* Whilst living among the Bashkirs of the province of Samara in 1872, I found some interesting traditions regarding this pretender. Though nearly a century had elapsed since his death (1775), his name, his personal appearance, and his exploits were well known even to the younger generation. My informants firmly believed that he was not an impostor, but the genuine Tsar, dethroned by his ambitious consort, and that he never was taken prisoner, but "went away into foreign lands." When I asked whether he was still alive, and whether he might not one day return, they replied that they did not know.

† See ukáze of October 7th, 1792.

‡ As an example of making presents of serfs, the following may be cited. Count Panin presented some of his subordinates for an Imperial recompense, and on receiving a refusal, made them a present of 4,000 serfs from his own estates.—Béláef, p. 320.

individually. The only legal restriction was that they should not be offered for sale at the time of the conscription, and that they should at no time be sold publicly by auction, because such a custom was considered as "unbecoming in a European State." In all other respects the serfs might be treated as private property, and this view is to be found not only in the legislation, but also in the popular conceptions. It became customary—a custom that continued down to the year 1861—to compute a noble's fortune, not by his yearly revenue or the extent of his estate, but by the number of his serfs. Instead of saying that a man had so many hundreds or thousands a year, or so many acres, it was commonly said that he had so many hundreds or thousands of "souls." And over these "souls" he exercised the most unlimited authority. The serfs had no legal means of self-defense. The Government feared that the granting to them of judicial or administrative protection would inevitably awaken in them a spirit of insubordination, and hence it was ordered that those who presented complaints should be punished with the knout and sent to the mines.* It was only in extreme cases, when some instance of atrocious cruelty happened to reach the ears of the sovereign, that the authorities interfered in the proprietor's jurisdiction, and these cases had not the slightest influence on the proprietors in general.†

The last years of the eighteenth century may be regarded as the turning-point in the history of serfage. Up till that time the power of the proprietors had steadily increased, and the area of serfage had rapidly expanded. Under the Emperor Paul we find the first decided symptoms of a reaction. He regarded the proprietors as his most efficient officers of police, but he desired to limit their authority, and for this purpose issued an ukaze to the effect that the serfs should not be forced to work for their

* See the ukazes of 22d August, 1767, and 30th March, 1781.

† Perhaps the most horrible case on record is that of a certain lady called Saltykóf, who was brought to justice in 1768. According to the ukaze regarding her crimes, she had killed by inhuman tortures in the course of ten or eleven years about a hundred of her serfs, chiefly of the female sex, and among them several young girls of eleven and twelve years of age. According to popular belief her cruelty proceeded from cannibal propensities, but this was not confirmed by the judicial investigation. Details in the "*Russki Arkhiv*," 1865, pp. 644-652. The atrocities practiced on the estate of Count Arakhtchéyef, the favorite of Alexander I., at the commencement of the present century, have been frequently described, and are scarcely less revolting.

masters more than three days in the week. With the accession of Alexander I. in 1801 commenced a long series of abortive projects of a general emancipation, and endless attempts to correct the more glaring abuses; and during the reign of Nicholas no less than six committees were formed at different times to consider the question. But the practical result of all these efforts was extremely small. The custom of giving grants of land with peasants was abolished; certain slight restrictions were placed on the authority of the proprietors; a number of the worst specimens of the class were removed from the administration of their estates; a few who were convicted of atrocious cruelty were exiled to Siberia;* and some thousands of serfs were actually emancipated; but until the present reign no decisive radical measures were attempted, and the serfs did not receive even the right of making formal complaints. Serfage had in fact come to be regarded as a vital part of the State organism, and the only sure basis for autocracy. It was therefore treated tenderly, and the rights and protection accorded by various ukazes were almost entirely illusory.

If we compare the development of serfage in Russia and in Western Europe, we find very many points in common, but in Russia the movement had certain peculiarities. One of the most important of these was caused by the rapid development of the autocratic power. In feudal Europe, where there was no strong central authority to control the noblesse, the free Communes entirely, or almost entirely, disappeared. They were either appropriated by the nobles or voluntarily submitted to powerful landed proprietors or to monasteries, and in this way the whole of the reclaimed land, with a few rare exceptions, became the property of the nobles or of the church. In Russia we find the same movement, but it was arrested by the Imperial power before all the land had been appropriated. The nobles could reduce to serfage the peasants settled on their estates, but they could not take possession of the free Communes, because such an appropria-

* Speranski, for instance, when Governor of the province of Penza, brought to justice, amongst others, a proprietor who had caused one of his serfs to be flogged to death, and a lady who had murdered a serf boy by pricking him with a pen-knife because he had neglected to take proper care of a tame rabbit committed to his charge!—Korff, "*Zhizn Speránskago*," II., p. 127. Note.

take the provinces separately we find great variations from this average. In five provinces the serfs were less than three per cent., whilst in others they formed more than seventy per cent. of the population! This is not an accidental phenomenon. In the geographical distribution of serfage we can see reflected the origin and history of the institution.

If we were to construct a map showing the geographical distribution of the serf population, we should at once perceive that serfage radiated from Moscow. Starting from that city as a center and traveling in any direction towards the confines of the Empire, we find that, after making allowance for a few disturbing local influences, the proportion of serfs regularly declines in the successive provinces traversed. In the region representing the old Muscovite Tsardom they form considerably more than a half of the peasantry. Immediately to the south and east of this, in the territory that was gradually annexed during the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth century, the proportion varies from twenty-five to fifty per cent., and in the more recently annexed provinces it steadily decreases till it almost reaches zero.

We may perceive, too, that the percentage of serfs decreases toward the north much more rapidly than toward the east and south. This points to the essentially agricultural nature of serfage in its infancy. In the south and east there was abundance of rich "black earth" celebrated for its fertility, and the nobles in quest of estates naturally preferred this region to the inhospitable north, with its poor soil and severe climate.

A more careful examination of the supposed map * would bring out other interesting facts. Let me notice one by way of illustration. Had serfage been the result of conquest we should have found the Slavonic race settled on the State Demesnes, and the Finnish and Tartar tribes supplying the serfs of the nobles. In reality we find quite the reverse; the Finns and Tartars were nearly all State Peasants, and the serfs of the proprietors were nearly all of Slavonic race. This is to be accounted for by the fact that the Finnish and Tartar tribes inhabit chiefly the outly-

* Such a map was actually constructed by Troinitski ("Krêpostnoé Naselénie v Rossii," St. Petersburg, 1861), but it is not nearly so graphic as it might be.

ing regions, in which serfage never attained such dimensions as in the center of the Empire.

The dues paid by the serfs were of three kinds: labor, money, and farm produce. The last-named is so unimportant that it may be dismissed in a few words. It consisted chiefly of eggs, chickens, lambs, mushrooms, wild berries, and linen cloth. The amount of these various products depended entirely on the will of the master. The other two kinds of dues, as more important, we must examine more closely.

When a proprietor had abundance of fertile land and wished to farm on his own account, he commonly demanded from his serfs as much labor as possible. Under such a master the serfs were probably entirely free from money dues, and fulfilled their obligations to him by laboring in his fields in summer and transporting his grain to market in winter. When, on the contrary, a landowner had more serf labor at his disposal than he required for the cultivation of his fields, he put the superfluous serfs "on *obrók*"—that is to say, he allowed them to go and work where they pleased on condition of paying him a fixed yearly sum. Sometimes the proprietor did not farm at all on his own account, in which case he put all the serfs "on *obrók*," and generally gave to the Commune in usufruct the whole of the arable land and pasturage. In this way the *Mir* played the part of a tenant.

We have here the basis for a simple and important classification of estates in the time of serfage: (1) Estates on which the dues were exclusively in labor; (2) Estates on which the dues were partly in labor and partly in money; and (3) Estates on which the dues were exclusively in money.

In the manner of exacting the labor dues there was considerable variety. According to the famous manifesto of Paul I., the peasant could not be compelled to work more than three days in the week; but this law was by no means universally observed, and those who did observe it had various methods of applying it. A few took it literally, and laid down a rule that the serfs should work for them three definite days in the week—for example, every Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday—but this was an extremely inconvenient method, for it prevented the field labor from being carried on regularly. A much more rational system was that according to which one-half of the serfs worked the first three days of the week, and the other half the remaining three. In this

way there was, without any contravention of the law, a regular and constant supply of labor. It seems, however, that the great majority of the proprietors followed no strict method, and paid no attention whatever to Paul's manifesto, which gave to the peasant no legal means of making formal complaints. They simply summoned daily as many laborers as they required. The evil consequences of this for the peasants' crops were in part counteracted by making the peasants sow their own grain a little later than that of the proprietor, so that the master's harvest-work was finished, or nearly finished, before their grain was ripe. This combination did not, however, always succeed, and in cases where there was a conflict of interests, the serf was, of course, the losing party. All that remained for him to do in such cases was to work a little in his own fields before six o'clock in the morning and after nine o'clock at night, and in order to render this possible, he economized his strength, and worked as little as possible in his master's fields during the day.

It has frequently been remarked, and with much truth—though the indiscriminate application of the principle has often led to unjustifiable legislative inactivity—that the practical result of institutions depends less on the intrinsic abstract nature of the institutions themselves than on the character of those who work them. So it was with serfage. When a proprietor habitually acted towards his serfs in an enlightened, rational, humane way, they had little reason to complain of their position, and their life was much easier than that of many men who live in a state of complete individual freedom and unlimited, unrestricted competition. When I say that the condition of many free men is worse than was the condition of many Russian serfs, the reader must not imagine that I am thinking of some barbarous tribe among whom freedom means an utter absence of law and an unrestricted right of pillage. On the contrary, I am thinking of a class of men who have the good fortune to live under the beneficent protection of British law, not in some distant, inhospitable colony, but between St. George's Channel and the North Sea. However paradoxical the statement may seem to those who are in the habit of regarding all forms of slavery from the sentimental point of view, it is unquestionable that the condition of serfs under such a proprietor as I have supposed was much more enviable than that of the majority of English agricultural laborers. Each family had

a house of its own, with a cabbage-garden, one or more horses, one or two cows, several sheep, poultry, agricultural implements, a share of the Communal land, and everything else necessary for carrying on its small farming operations; and in return for this it had to supply the proprietor with an amount of labor which was by no means oppressive. If, for instance, a serf had three adult sons—and the households, as I have said, were at that time generally numerous—two of them might work for the proprietor, whilst he himself and the remaining son could attend exclusively to the family affairs. From those events which used to be called “the visitations of God” he had no fear of being permanently ruined. If his house was burnt, or his cattle died from the plague, or a series of “bad years” left him without seed for his fields, he could always count upon temporary assistance from his master. He was protected, too, against all oppression and exactions on the part of the officials; for the police, when there was any cause for its interference, applied to the proprietor, who was to a certain extent responsible for his serfs. Thus the serf might live a tranquil, contented life, and die at a ripe old age, without ever having been conscious that serfage was a burden.

If all the serfs had lived in this way we might, perhaps, regret that the Emancipation was ever undertaken. In reality there was, as the French say, *le revers de la médaille*, and serfage generally appeared under a form very different from that which I have just depicted. The proprietors were, unfortunately, not all of the enlightened, humane type. Amongst them were many who demanded from their serfs a most inordinate amount of labor, and treated them in a most inhuman fashion.

These oppressors of their serfs may be divided into four categories. First, there were the proprietors who managed their own estates, and oppressed simply for the purpose of increasing their revenues. Secondly, there were a number of retired officers, who wished to establish a certain order and discipline on their estates, and who employed for this purpose the barbarous measures which were until lately used in the army, believing that merciless corporal punishment was the only means of curing laziness, disorderliness, and other vices. Thirdly, there were the absentees who lived beyond their means, and demanded from their steward, under pain of giving him or his son as a recruit, a much greater yearly sum than the estate could be reasonably expected to yield. Lastly, in the

latter years of serfage, there were a number of men who bought estates as a mercantile speculation, and endeavored to make as much money out of them as possible in the shortest possible space of time.

Of all hard masters, the last-named were the most terrible. Utterly indifferent to the welfare of the serfs and the ultimate fate of the property, they cut down the timber, sold the cattle, exacted heavy money dues under threats of giving the serfs or their children as recruits, presented to the military authorities a number of conscripts greater than was required by law—selling the conscription receipts (*zatchétniya kvitántsii*) to the merchants and burghers who were liable to the conscription but did not wish to serve—compelled some of the richer serfs to buy their liberty at an enormous price, and, in a word, used every means, legal and illegal, for extracting money. By this system of management they ruined the estate completely in the course of a few years; but by that time they had realized probably the whole sum paid, with a very fair profit from the operation; and this profit could be considerably augmented by selling a number of peasant families for transportation to another estate (*na svoz*), or by mortgaging the property in the Opekúnski Sovét—a Government institution which lent money on landed property without examining carefully the nature of the security.

As to the means which the proprietors possessed of oppressing their peasants, we must distinguish between the legal and the actual. The legal were almost as complete as any one could desire. "The proprietor," it is said in the Laws (Vol. IX., § 1045, ed. an. 1857), "may impose on his serfs every kind of labor, may take from them money dues (*obrók*) and demand from them personal service, with this one restriction, that they should not be thereby ruined, and that the number of days fixed by law should be left to them for their own work."* Besides this, he had the right to transform peasants into domestic servants, and might, instead of employing them in his own service, hire them out to others who had the rights and privileges of noblesse (§§ 1047-48). For all offenses committed against himself or against any one under his

* I give here the references to the Code, because Russians commonly believe and assert that the hiring out of serfs, the infliction of corporal punishment, and similar practices were merely abuses unauthorized by law.

jurisdiction he could subject the guilty ones to corporal punishment not exceeding forty lashes with the birch or fifteen blows with the stick (§ 1052); and if he considered any of his serfs as incorrigible he could present them to the authorities to be drafted into the army or transported to Siberia as he might desire (§ § 1053-55). In cases of insubordination, where the ordinary domestic means of discipline did not suffice, he could call in the police and the military to support his authority.

Such were the legal means by which the proprietor might oppress his peasants, and it will be readily understood that they were very considerable and very elastic. By law he had the power to impose any dues in labor or money which he might think fit, and in all cases the serfs were ordered to be docile and obedient (§ 1027). Corporal punishment, though restricted by law, he could in reality apply to any extent. Certainly none of the serfs, and very few of the proprietors, were aware that the law placed any restriction on this right. All the proprietors were in the habit of using corporal punishment as they thought proper, and unless a proprietor became notorious for inhuman cruelty, the authorities never thought of interfering. But in the eyes of the peasants corporal punishment was not the worst. What they feared infinitely more than the birch or the stick was the proprietor's power of giving them or their sons as recruits. The law assumed that this extreme means would be employed only against those serfs who showed themselves incorrigibly vicious or insubordinate; but the authorities accepted those presented without making any investigations, and consequently the proprietor might use this power as an effective means of extortion.

Against these means of extortion and oppression the serfs had no legal protection. The law provided them with no means of resisting any injustice to which they might be subjected, or of bringing to punishment the master who oppressed and ruined them. The Government, notwithstanding its sincere desire to protect them from inordinate burdens and cruel treatment, rarely interfered between the master and his serfs, being afraid of thereby undermining the authority of the proprietors, and awakening among the peasantry a spirit of insubordination. The serfs were left, therefore, to their own resources, and had to defend themselves as they best could. The simplest way was open mutiny; but this was rarely employed, for they knew by experience that

any attempt of the kind would be at once put down by the military and mercilessly punished. Much more favorite and efficient methods were passive resistance, flight, and fire-raising or murder.

We might naturally suppose that an unscrupulous proprietor, armed with the enormous legal and actual power which I have just described, could very easily extort from his peasants anything he desired. In reality, however, the process of extortion, when it exceeded a certain measure, was a very difficult operation. The Russian peasant has a capacity of patient endurance that would do honor to a martyr, and a power of continued, dogged, passive resistance such as is possessed, I believe, by no other class of men in Europe; and these qualities formed a very powerful barrier against the rapacity of unconscientious proprietors. As soon as the serfs remarked in their master a tendency to rapacity and extortion, they at once took measures to defend themselves. Their first step was to sell secretly all the cattle which they did not actually require, and all the movable property which they possessed, except the few articles necessary for everyday use; and the little capital that they thus realized was carefully hidden somewhere in or near the house. When this had been effected, the proprietor might threaten and punish as he liked, but he rarely succeeded in unearthing the hidden treasure. Many a peasant, under such circumstances, bore patiently the most cruel punishment, and saw his sons taken away as recruits, and yet he persisted in declaring that he had no money to ransom himself and his children. A spectator in such a case would probably have advised him to give up his little store of money, and thereby liberate himself from persecution; but the peasants reasoned otherwise. They were convinced, and not without reason, that the sacrifice of their little capital would merely put off the evil day, and that the persecution would very soon recommence. In this way they would have to suffer as before, and have the additional mortification of feeling that they had spent to no purpose the little that they possessed. Their fatalistic belief in the "perhaps" (*avos*) came here to their aid. Perhaps the proprietor might become weary of his efforts when he saw that they led to no result, or perhaps something might happen which would remove the persecutor.

It always happened, however, that when a proprietor treated his serfs with extreme injustice and cruelty, some of them lost patience, and sought refuge in flight. As the estates lay perfectly open on

all sides, and it was utterly impossible to exercise a strict supervision, nothing was easier than to run away, and the fugitive might be a hundred miles off before his absence was noticed. Why then did not all run away as soon as the master began to oppress them? There were several reasons which made the peasant bear much, rather than adopt this resource. In the first place, he had almost always a wife and family, and he could not possibly take them with him; flight, therefore, was expatriation for life in its most terrible form. Besides this, the life of a fugitive serf was by no means enviable. He was liable at any moment to fall into the hands of the police, and to be put in prison or sent back to his master. So little charm indeed did this life present that not unfrequently after a few months or a few years the fugitive returned of his own accord to his former domicile.

Regarding fugitives or passportless wanderers in general, I may here remark parenthetically that there were two kinds. In the first place, there was the young, able-bodied peasant, who fled from the oppression of his master or from the conscription. Such a fugitive almost always sought out for himself a new domicile—generally in the southern provinces, where there was a great scarcity of laborers, and where many proprietors habitually welcomed all peasants who presented themselves, without making any inquiries as to passports. In the second place, there were those who chose fugitivism as a permanent mode of life. These were, for the most part, men or women of a certain age—widowers or widows—who had no close family ties, and who were too infirm or too lazy to work. The majority of these assumed the character of pilgrims. As such they could always find enough to eat, and could generally even collect a few roubles with which to grease the palm of any zealous police-officer who should arrest them. For a life of this kind Russia presented, and still presents, peculiar facilities. There are abundance of monasteries, where all comers may live for three days without any questions being asked, and where those who are willing to do a little work for the patron saint may live for a much longer period. Then there are the towns, where the rich merchants consider almsgiving as very profitable for salvation. And, lastly, there are the villages, where a professing pilgrim is sure to be hospitably received and entertained so long as he refrains from stealing and other acts too grossly inconsistent with his assumed character. For those who contented themselves with simple fare,

and did not seek to avoid the usual privations of a wanderer's life, these ordinary means of subsistence were amply sufficient. Those who were more ambitious and more cunning often employed their talents with great success in the world of the Old Ritualists and Sectarrians.

The last and most desperate means of defense which the serfs possessed were fire-raising and murder. With regard to the amount of fire-raising there are no trustworthy statistics. With regard to the number of agrarian murders I possessed some interesting statistical data, but have, unfortunately, lost them. I may say, however, that these cases were not very numerous. This is to be explained in part by the patient, long-suffering character of the peasantry, and in part by the fact that the great majority of the proprietors were by no means such inhuman taskmasters as is sometimes supposed. When a case did occur, the Administration always made a strict investigation—punishing the guilty with exemplary severity, and taking no account of the provocation to which they had been subjected. The peasantry, on the contrary—at least, when the act was not the result of mere personal vengeance—secretly sympathized with “the unfortunates,” and long cherished their memory as that of men who had suffered for the Mir.

In speaking of the serfs I have hitherto confined my attention to the members of the Mir, or rural Commune—that is to say, the peasants in the narrower sense of the term; but besides these there were the Dvoróvnié, or domestic servants, and of these I must add a word or two.

The Dvoróvnié were domestic slaves rather than serfs in the proper sense of the word. Let us, however, avoid wounding unnecessarily Russian sensibilities by the use of the ill-sounding word. We may call the class in question “domestics”—remembering, of course, that they were not quite domestic servants in the ordinary sense. They received no wages, were not at liberty to change masters, possessed almost no legal rights, and might be punished, hired out, or sold by their owners without any infraction of the written law.

These “domestics” were very numerous—out of all proportion to the work to be performed—and could consequently lead a very lazy life;* but the peasant considered it a great misfortune to be

* Those proprietors who kept orchestras, large packs of hounds, &c., had sometimes several hundred domestic serfs.

transferred to their ranks, for he thereby lost his share of the Communal land and the little independence which he enjoyed. It very rarely happened, however, that the proprietor took an able-bodied peasant as domestic. The class generally kept up its numbers by the legitimate and illegitimate method of natural increase; and involuntary additions were occasionally made when orphans were left without near relatives, and no other family wished to adopt them. To this class belonged the lackeys, servant-girls, cooks, coachmen, stable-boys, gardeners, and a large number of nondescript old men and women who had no very clearly-defined functions. Those of them who were married and had children occupied a position intermediate between the ordinary domestic servant and the peasant. On the one hand they received from the master a monthly allowance of food and a yearly allowance of clothes, and they were obliged to live in the immediate vicinity of the mansion-house, but on the other hand they had each a separate house or apartment, with a little cabbage-garden, and commonly a small plot of flax. The unmarried ones lived in all respects like ordinary domestic servants.

Of the whole number of serfs belonging to the proprietors, the domestics formed, according to the last census, no less than $6\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. (6.79),* and their numbers were evidently rapidly increasing, for in the preceding census they represented only 4.79 per cent. of the whole. This fact seems all the more remarkable when we observe that during this period the number of peasant serfs had diminished from 20,576,229 to 20,158,231.

I must now bring this long chapter to an end, though I feel that I have been able to do little more than sketch roughly in outline the subject which I desired to describe. I have endeavored to represent serfage in its normal, ordinary forms rather than in its occasional monstrous manifestations. Of these latter I have a collection containing ample materials for a whole series of sensation novels, but I refrain from quoting them, because I do not

* The whole number of serfs belonging to the proprietors at the time of the Emancipation was:—

- - - - -	21,625,609
Peasant serfs - - - - -	20,158,231
Domestics - - - - -	1,467,378

Troinitski, "*Krepostnoe Naselénie v Rossii*," p. 57. The difference between these figures and those already given on page 254 is to be accounted for partly by the increase of population since 1859 and partly by official inaccuracy.

believe that the criminal annals of a country give a fair representation of its real condition. Imagine an author describing family life in England by the chronicles of the Divorce Court! The method would, of course, seem to all men incredibly absurd, and yet it would not be much more unjust than that of an author who should describe serfage in Russia by those cases of reckless oppression and inhuman cruelty which certainly did sometimes occur, but which as certainly were exceptional. Most foreigners are already, I believe, only too disposed to exaggerate the oppression and cruelty to which serfage gave rise, so that in quoting a number of striking examples I should simply be pandering to that taste for the horrible and the sensational which is for the present in need of no stimulus.

It must not, however, be supposed that in refraining from all description of those abuses of authority which the proprietors sometimes practiced I am actuated by any desire to whitewash serfage or attenuate its evil consequences. No great body of men could long wield such enormous uncontrolled power without abusing it,* and no great body of men could long live under such power without suffering morally and materially from its pernicious influence. And it must be remembered that this pernicious influence affected not only the serfs, but also the proprietors. If serfage did not create that moral apathy and intellectual lethargy which formed, as it were, the atmosphere of Russian provincial life, it did much at least to preserve it. In short, serfage was the chief barrier to all material and moral progress, and it was, therefore, natural that in a time of moral awakening such as that which I have described in the preceding chapter the question of Serf Emancipation at once came to the front.

* The number of deposed proprietors—or rather the number of estates placed under curators in consequence of the abuse of authority on the part of their owners—amounted in 1859 to 215. So at least I found in a MS. official document shown to me by Mr. N. A. Milutin.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE EMANCIPATION OF THE SERFS.

The Question raised—Chief Committee—The Nobles of the Lithuanian Provinces—The Tsar's Broad Hint to the Noblesse—Enthusiasm in the Press—The Proprietors—Political Aspirations—No Opposition—The Government—Public Opinion—Fear of the Proletariate—The Provincial Committees—The Elaboration Commission—The Question ripens—Provincial Deputies—Discontent and Demonstrations—The Manifesto—Fundamental Principles of the Law—Illusions and Disappointment of the Serfs—Arbiters of the Peace—A Characteristic Incident—Redemption—Who effected the Emancipation?

IT is a fundamental principle of Russian political organization that all initiative in public affairs proceeds from the autocratic power. The wide-spread desire, therefore, for the Emancipation of the serfs did not find free expression so long as the Emperor kept silence regarding his intentions. The educated classes watched anxiously for some sign, and soon a sign was given to them. In March, 1856—a few days after the publication of the manifesto announcing the conclusion of peace with the Western Powers—his Majesty said to the Marshals of the Noblesse in Moscow: "For the removal of certain unfounded reports I consider it necessary to declare to you that I have not at present the intention of annihilating serfage; but certainly, as you yourselves know, the existing manner of possessing serfs cannot remain unchanged. It is better to abolish serfage from above than to await the time when it will begin to abolish itself from below. I request you, gentlemen, to consider how this can be put into execution, and to submit my words to the noblesse for their consideration."

These words were intended, it is said, to sound the noblesse, and induce them to make a voluntary proposal. If such was the intention, the speech had not the desired effect. The magnates of Moscow had very little Abolitionist enthusiasm, and those who really wished to see serfage abolished considered the Imperial ut-

terance too vague and oracular to justify positive action. The excitement caused by the incident soon subsided, and as no further steps were taken for some time, many people assumed that the consideration of the question had been indefinitely postponed. "The Government," it was said, "evidently intended to raise the question, but on perceiving the indifference or hostility of the landed proprietors, became frightened and drew back."

The Emperor was in reality disappointed. He had expected that his "faithful Moscow noblesse," of which he was wont to say he was himself a member, would at once respond to his call, and that the ancient capital would have the honor of beginning the work. And if the example were thus given by Moscow he had no doubt that it would soon be followed by the other provinces. He now perceived that the fundamental principles on which the Emancipation should be effected must be laid down by the Government, and for this purpose he created a secret committee composed of the great officers of State.

This "Chief Committee for Peasant Affairs," as it was afterwards called, devoted six months to studying the history of the question. Proposed Emancipation was by no means a new phenomenon in Russia. Ever since the time of Catherine II. the Government had attempted to improve the condition of the serfs, and on more than one occasion a general Emancipation had been contemplated. These efforts, though they led to small practical results, had at least the good effect of ripening the question, and of bringing out certain fundamental principles which would necessarily form the basis of all future projects. The chief of these principles was that the State should not consent to any project which would uproot the peasant from the soil and allow him to wander about at will; for such a measure would certainly render the collection of the taxes impossible, and in all probability produce the most frightful agrarian disorders. And to this general principle there was an important corollary: If severe restrictions were to be placed on the free migration of the peasantry, it would be necessary to provide them with land in the immediate vicinity of the villages; otherwise they must inevitably fall back under the power of the proprietors, and a new and worse kind of serfage would thus be created. But in order to give land to the peasantry it would be necessary to take it from the proprietors; and this expropriation seemed to many a most unjustifiable infringement of

the sacred right of property. It was this consideration that had formerly restrained Nicholas from taking any decisive measures with regard to serfage; and it had now considerable weight with the members of the committee, who were nearly all great land-owners.

Notwithstanding the strenuous exertions of the Grand Duke Constantine, who had been appointed a member for the express purpose of accelerating the proceedings, the committee did not show as much zeal and energy as was desired, and orders were given to take some decided step. A convenient opportunity soon presented itself.

In the Lithuanian Provinces, where the nobles were Polish by origin and sympathies, the miserable condition of the peasantry had induced the Government in the time of Nicholas to limit the arbitrary power of the serf-owners by so-called Inventories, in which the mutual obligations of masters and serfs were regulated and defined. These Inventories had caused great dissatisfaction, and the proprietors now proposed that they should be revised. Of this the Government determined to take advantage. On the somewhat violent assumption that these proprietors wished to emancipate their serfs, an Imperial rescript was prepared, approving of their supposed desire, and empowering them to form committees for the preparation of definite projects.* In the rescript itself the word emancipation was studiously avoided, but there could be no doubt as to the implied meaning, for it was expressly stated in the supplementary considerations that "the abolition of serfage must be effected, not suddenly, but gradually." Four days later the Minister of the Interior, in accordance with a secret order from the Emperor, sent a circular to the Governors and Marshals of Noblesse all over Russia Proper, informing them that the nobles of the Lithuanian Provinces "had recognized the necessity of liberating the peasants," and that "this noble intention" had afforded peculiar satisfaction to his Majesty. A copy of the rescript and the fundamental principles to be observed accompanied the circular, "in case the nobles of other provinces should express a similar desire."

* This celebrated document is known as "The Rescript to Nazimof." More than once in the course of conversation I did all in my power, within the limits of politeness and discretion, to extract from General Nazimof a detailed account of this important episode, but my efforts were unsuccessful.

This circular produced an immense sensation throughout the country. No one could for a moment misunderstand the suggestion that the nobles of other provinces *might possibly* express a desire to liberate their serfs. Such vague words, when spoken by an autocrat, have a very definite and unmistakable meaning, which prudent loyal subjects have no difficulty in understanding. If any doubted, their doubts were soon dispelled, for the Emperor, a few weeks later, publicly expressed a hope that, with the help of God and the co-operation of the nobles, the work would be successfully accomplished.

The die was cast, and the Government looked anxiously to see the result.

The periodical Press—which was at once the product and the fomentor of the liberal aspirations—hailed the raising of the question with boundless enthusiasm. The Emancipation, it was said, would certainly open a new and glorious epoch in the national history. Serfage was described as an ulcer that had long been poisoning the national blood ; as an enormous weight under which the whole nation groaned ; as an insurmountable obstacle, preventing all material and moral progress ; as a cumbrous load, which rendered all free, vigorous action impossible, and prevented Russia from rising to the level of the Western nations. If Russia had succeeded in stemming the flood of adverse fortune in spite of this millstone round her neck, what might she not accomplish when free and untrammelled ? All sections of the literary world had arguments to offer in support of the foregone conclusion. The moralists declared that all the prevailing vices were the product of serfage, and that moral progress was impossible in an atmosphere of slavery ; the lawyers asserted that the arbitrary authority of the proprietors over the peasants had no firm legal basis ; the economists explained that free labor was an indispensable condition of industrial and commercial prosperity ; the philosophical historians showed that the normal historical development of the country demanded the immediate abolition of this superannuated remnant of barbarism ; and the writers of the sentimental, gushing type poured forth endless effusions about brotherly love to the weak and the oppressed. In a word, the Press was for the moment unanimous, and displayed a feverish excitement which demanded a liberal use of superlatives.

This enthusiastic tone accorded perfectly with the feelings of a

large section of the nobles. Nearly the whole of the noblesse was more or less affected by the new-born enthusiasm for everything just, humanitarian, and liberal. The aspirations found, of course, their most ardent representatives among the educated youth ; but they were by no means confined to the younger men, who had passed through the universities and had always regarded serfage as a stain on the national honor. Many a Saul was found among the prophets. Many an old man, with gray hairs and grandchildren, who had all his life placidly enjoyed the fruits of serf labor, was now heard to speak of serfage as an antiquated institution which could not be reconciled with modern humanitarian ideas ; and not a few of all ages, who had formerly never thought of reading books or newspapers, now perused assiduously the periodical literature, and picked up the liberal and humanitarian phrases with which it was filled.

This Abolitionist fervor was considerably augmented by certain political aspirations which did not appear in the newspapers, but which were at that time very generally entertained. In spite of the Press-censure a large section of the educated classes had become acquainted with the political literature of France and Germany, and had imbibed therefrom an unbounded admiration for constitutional government. A constitution, it was thought, would necessarily remove all political evils and create something like a political millennium. And it was not to be a constitution of the ordinary sort—the fruit of compromise between hostile political parties—but an institution designed calmly according to the latest results of political science, and so constructed that all classes would voluntarily contribute to the general welfare. The necessary prelude to this happy era of political liberty was, of course, the abolition of serfage. The nobles would voluntarily give up their power over their serfs, and receive a Constitution as an indemnification and reward.

There were, however, many nobles of the old school, who remained impervious to all these new feelings and ideas. On them the raising of the Emancipation question had a very different effect. They had no source of revenue but their estates, and they could not conceive the possibility of working their estates without serf labor. If the peasant was indolent and careless even under strict supervision, what would he become when no longer under the authority of a master ? If the profits from farming were

already small, what would they be when no one would work without wages? And this was not the worst, for it was quite evident from the circular that the land question was to be raised, and that a considerable portion of each estate would be transferred, at least for a time, to the emancipated peasants.

To the proprietors who looked at the question in this way the prospect of Emancipation was certainly not at all agreeable, but we must not imagine that they felt as English landowners would feel if threatened by a similar danger. In England an hereditary estate has for the family a value far beyond what it would bring in the market. It is regarded as one and indivisible, and any dismemberment of it would be looked upon as a grave family misfortune. In Russia, on the contrary, estates have nothing of this semi-sacred character, and may be at any time dismembered without outraging family feeling or traditional associations. Indeed, it is a general rule that when a proprietor dies, leaving only one estate and several children, the property is broken up into fractions and divided among the heirs. Even the prospect of pecuniary sacrifice did not alarm the Russians so much as it would alarm Englishmen. Men who keep no accounts and take little thought for the morrow are much less averse to making pecuniary sacrifices—whether for a wise or a foolish purpose—than those who carefully arrange their mode of life according to their income.

Still, after due allowance has been made for these peculiarities, it must be admitted that the feeling of dissatisfaction and alarm was very wide-spread. Even Russians do not like the prospect of losing a part of their land and income. No protest, however, was entered, and no opposition was made. Those who were hostile to the measure were ashamed to show themselves selfish and unpatriotic. At the same time they knew very well that the Emperor, if he wished, could effect the Emancipation in spite of them, and that resistance on their part would draw down upon them the Imperial displeasure, without affording any compensating advantage. They knew, too, that there was a danger from below, so that any useless show of opposition would be like playing with matches in a powder-magazine. The serfs already expected, and would soon know, that the Tsar desired to set them free, and they might, if they suspected that the proprietors were trying to frustrate the Tsar's benevolent intentions, use violent measures to get

rid of the opposition. The idea of agrarian massacres had already taken possession of many timid minds. Besides this, all classes of the proprietors felt that if the work was to be done, it should be done by the noblesse and not by the bureaucracy. If it were effected by the nobles the interests of the land-owners would be duly considered, but if it were effected by the Administration without their concurrence and co-operation, their interests would be neglected, and there would inevitably be an enormous amount of jobbery and corruption. In accordance with this view the noblesse corporations of the various provinces successively requested permission to form committees for the consideration of the question, and during the year 1858 a committee was opened in almost every province in which serfage existed.

In this way the question was apparently handed over for solution to the nobles, but in reality the noblesse was called upon merely to advise, and not to legislate. The Government not only laid down the fundamental principles of the scheme, and continually exercised a considerable influence over the work of construction; it at the same time reserved to itself the right of modifying or rejecting the projects proposed by the committees.

According to these fundamental principles the serfs should be emancipated gradually, so that for some time they would remain attached to the glebe and subject to the authority of the proprietors. During this transition period they should redeem by money payments or labor their houses and gardens, and enjoy in usufruct a certain quantity of land, sufficient to enable them to support themselves, and to fulfill their obligations to the State as well as to the proprietor. In return for this land they should pay a yearly rent in money, produce, or labor, over and above the yearly sum paid for the redemption of their houses and gardens. As to what should be done after the expiry of the transition period, the Government seems to have had no clearly-conceived intentions. Probably it hoped that by that time the proprietors and their emancipated serfs would have invented some convenient *modus vivendi*, and that nothing but a little legislative regulation would be necessary. But radical legislation is like the letting-out of water. These fundamental principles, adopted at first with a view to mere immediate practical necessity, soon acquired a very different significance. To understand this we must turn for a moment to the periodical literature.

Until the serf question came to be discussed, the reform aspirations were very vague, and consequently there was a remarkable unanimity among their representatives. The educated classes thought that Russia should at once adopt from the West all those liberal principles and institutions, the exclusion of which had prevented the country from rising to the level of the Western nations. But very soon symptoms of a schism became apparent. Whilst the literature in general was still preaching the doctrine that Russia should adopt everything that was "liberal," a few voices began to be heard warning the unwary that much which bore the name of liberal was in reality already antiquated and worthless—that Russia ought not to follow blindly in the footsteps of other nations, but ought rather to profit by their experience, and avoid the errors into which they had fallen. The chief of these errors was, according to these new teachers, the abnormal development of individualism—in other words, the adoption of that principle of *laissez faire, laissez passer*, which forms the basis of what may be called the Orthodox School of Political Economists. Individualism and unrestricted competition, it was said, have now reached in the West an abnormal and monstrous development. Supported by the *laissez faire* principle they have led—and must always lead—to the oppression of the weak, the tyranny of capital, the impoverishment of the masses for the benefit of the few, and the formation of a hungry, dangerous Proletariate! This has already been recognized by the most advanced thinkers of France and Germany. If these old countries cannot at once cure those evils, that is no reason for Russia to inoculate herself with them. She is still at the commencement of her career, and it would be insane folly for her to wander voluntarily for ages in the Desert, when a direct route to the Promised Land has been already discovered.

In order to convey some idea of the influence which this teaching exercised, I must here recall, at the risk of repeating myself, what I said in a former chapter. The Russians, as I have there pointed out, have a peculiar way of treating political and social questions. Having received their political education from books, they naturally attribute to theoretical considerations an importance which seems to us exaggerated. When any important or trivial question arises, they at once launch into the sea of philosophical principles, and pay less attention to the little objects close at hand than to the big ones that appear on the distant hori-

zon of the future. And when they set to work at any political reform they begin *ab ovo*. As they have no traditional prejudices to fetter them, and no traditional principles to lead them, they naturally take for their guidance the latest conclusions of political philosophy.

Bearing this in mind, let us see how it affected its Emancipation question. The Proletariate—described as a dangerous monster which was about to swallow up society in Western Europe, and which might at any moment cross the frontier unless kept out by vigorous measures—took possession of the popular imagination, and aroused the fears of the reading public. To the more intelligent part of that public it seemed that the best means of preventing the formation of a Proletariate in Russia was the transfer of land to the emancipated serfs, and the careful preservation of the rural Commune. “Now is the moment,” it was said, “for deciding the important question whether Russia is to fall a prey, like the Western nations, to this terrible evil, or whether she is to protect herself for ever against it. In the decision of this question lies the future destiny of the country. If the peasants be emancipated without land, or if those Communal institutions, which give to every man a share of the soil and secure this inestimable boon for the generations still unborn, be now abolished, a Proletariate will be rapidly formed, and the peasantry will become a disorganized mass of homeless wanderers like the English agricultural laborers. If, on the contrary, a fair share of land be granted to them, and if the Commune be made proprietor of the land ceded, the danger of a Proletariate is for ever removed, and Russia will thereby set an example to the civilized world! Never has a nation had such an opportunity of making an enormous leap forward on the road of progress, and never again will the opportunity occur. The Western nations have discovered their error when it is too late—when the peasantry have been already deprived of their land, and the laboring classes of the towns have already fallen a prey to the insatiable cupidity of the capitalists. In vain their most eminent thinkers warn and exhort. Ordinary remedies are no longer of any avail. But Russia may avoid all these dangers, if she but act wisely and prudently in this great matter. The peasants are still in actual, if not legal, possession of the land, and there is as yet no Proletariate in the towns. All that is necessary, therefore, is to

abolish the arbitrary authority of the proprietors without expropriating the peasants, and without disturbing the existing Communal institutions, which form the best barrier against pauperism."

These ideas were warmly espoused by many proprietors, and exercised a very great influence on the deliberations of the Provincial Committees. In these committees there were generally two groups. The majorities, whilst making large concessions to the claims of justice and expediency, endeavored to defend, as far as possible, the interests of their class; the minorities, though by no means indifferent to the interests of the class to which they belonged, allowed the more abstract theoretical considerations to be predominant. At first the majorities did all in their power to evade the fundamental principles laid down by the Government as much too favorable to the peasantry; but when they perceived that public opinion, as represented by the Press, went much further than the Government had ventured to go, they clung to these fundamental principles—which secured at least the property of the land to the proprietor—as their anchor of safety. Between the two parties arose naturally a violent spirit of hostility, and the Government found it advisable to decide that both should present their projects for consideration.

This hostility was not of such a kind as an Englishman might naturally imagine. In a country governed by genuine representative institutions the legal status of the peasantry, and their relations to the proprietors, are matters of vital political importance, and determine to a great extent the balance of political power. The subject is, therefore, well fitted to awaken class-feeling and traditional class-enmity; and we may be sure that if it were submitted to the noblesse of any country in Western Europe, the political element would occupy a very prominent place in the discussions. Not so in Russia. Under the scepter of the Tsars, as I have already explained, the social classes have never been allowed to fight out their own battles, and they have consequently no feelings of rivalry or enmity towards each other. As to the political power, it has been for centuries in the hands of the Autocrats, and likely to remain there for a long time to come. Many proprietors, it is true, imagined that the Emperor was about to create a parliament, and to grant a constitution; but those who indulged in such expectations were animated with a senti-

mental democratic spirit, and believed that under the constitutional régime nobles and peasants would act together in fraternal harmony. Political questions retired, therefore, to the background, and the great majority of the proprietors confined their attention to the less elevated questions which dealt with the matter of daily bread. Not only was serf labor to be abolished, but the villages, with the land on which they stood, were to be permanently separated from the estates, and a large part of the arable land was to be transferred in usufruct for an indefinite time to the emancipated peasantry. In the presence of such an important practical change in their daily life, the proprietors had little time or inclination to think of the balance of political power in the future or similar remote contingencies, and the discussions turned chiefly on the amount of land to be ceded, and the compensation to be received.

As the Provincial Committees worked independently, there was considerable diversity in the conclusions at which they arrived. The task of codifying these conclusions, and elaborating out of them a general scheme of Emancipation, was intrusted to a special Imperial Commission, composed partly of officials and partly of landed proprietors named by the Emperor.* Those who believed that the question had really been handed over to the noblesse assumed that this Commission would merely arrange the materials presented by the Provincial Committees, and that the Emancipation Law would thereafter be elaborated by a national assembly of deputies elected by the nobles. In reality the Commission, working in St. Petersburg under the direct guidance and control of the Government, fulfilled a very different and much more important function. Using the combined projects merely as a store-house from which it could draw the proposals it desired, it formed a new project of its own, which ultimately received, after undergoing modification in detail, the Imperial assent. Instead of being a mere *chancellerie*, as many supposed, it became in a certain sense the author of the Emancipation Law.

There were, as we have seen, in nearly all the Provincial Committees a majority and a minority, the former of which strove to defend the interests of the proprietors, whilst the latter paid more

* Known as the *Redaktsionnaya Komissiya*, or Elaboration Commission. Strictly speaking there were two, but they are commonly spoken of as one.

attention to theoretical considerations and endeavored to secure for the peasantry a large amount of land, Communal independence, and self-government. In the Commission there were the same two parties, but their relative strength was very different. Here the men of theory, instead of forming a minority, were more numerous than their opponents, and enjoyed the support of the Government, which supplied them with instructions for their guidance. In these instructions we see how much the question had ripened under the influence of the theoretical considerations. There is no longer any trace of the idea that the Emancipation should be gradual; on the contrary, it is expressly declared that the immediate effect of the law should be the complete abolition of the proprietor's authority. There is even evidence of a clear intention of removing the proprietor as far as possible from having any influence over his former serfs. The former sharp distinction between the land occupied by the village and the arable land to be ceded in usufruct likewise disappears, and it is merely said that efforts should be made to enable the peasants to become proprietors of the land they required. A few months later it was decided by the Emperor that the Communal usufruct should be perpetual, and that facilities should be given to the peasantry for redeeming this land.

The aim of the Government had thus become clear and well defined. The task to be performed was to transform the serfs at once, and with the least possible disturbance of the existing economic conditions, into a class of small Communal proprietors—that is to say, a class of free peasants possessing a house and garden, and a share of the Communal land. To effect this it was merely necessary to declare the serf personally free, to draw a clear line of demarcation between the Communal land and the rest of the estate, and to determine the price or rent which should be paid for this Communal property, inclusive of the land on which the village was built.

The law was prepared in strict accordance with these principles. As to the amount of land to be ceded, it was decided that the existing arrangements, founded on experience, should, as a general rule, be preserved—in other words, the land actually enjoyed by the peasants should be retained by them; and in order to prevent extreme cases of injustice, a maximum and a minimum were fixed for each district. In like manner, as to the dues, it was decided

that the existing arrangements should be taken as the basis of the calculation, but that the sum should be modified according to the amount of land ceded. At the same time facilities were to be given for the transforming of the labor dues into yearly money payments, and for enabling the peasants to redeem them, with the assistance of the Government in the form of credit.

This idea of redemption created, at first, a feeling of alarm among the proprietors. It was bad enough to be obliged to cede a large part of the estates in usufruct, but it seemed much worse to have to sell it. Redemption appeared to be a species of wholesale confiscation. But very soon it became evident that the redeeming of the land was profitable for both parties. Cession in perpetual usufruct was felt to be in reality tantamount to alienation of the land, whilst the immediate redemption would enable the proprietors, who had generally little or no ready money, to pay their debts, to clear their estates from mortgages, and to make the outlays necessary for the transition to free labor. The majority of the proprietors, therefore, said openly: "Let the Government give us a suitable compensation in money for the land that is taken from us, so that we may be at once freed from all further trouble and annoyance."

When it became known that the Commission was not merely arranging and codifying the materials, but elaborating a law of its own and regularly submitting its decisions for Imperial confirmation, a feeling of dissatisfaction appeared all over the country. The nobles perceived that the question was being taken out of their hands, and was being solved by a small body composed of bureaucrats and nominees of the Government. After having made a voluntary sacrifice of their rights, they were being unceremoniously pushed aside! They had still, however, the means of correcting this. The Emperor had publicly promised that before the project should become law, deputies from the Provincial Committees should be summoned to St. Petersburg to make objections and propose amendments.

The Commission and the Government would have willingly dispensed with all further advice from the nobles, but it was necessary to redeem the Imperial promise. Deputies were therefore summoned to the Capital, but they were not allowed to form, as they hoped, a public assembly for the discussion of the question. All their efforts to hold meetings were frustrated, and they were

required merely to answer in writing a list of printed questions regarding matters of detail. The fundamental principles, they were told, had already received the Imperial sanction, and were consequently removed from discussion. Those who desired to discuss details were invited individually to attend meetings of the Commission, where they found one or two members ready to engage with them in a little dialectical fencing. This, of course, did not give much satisfaction. Indeed, the ironical tone in which the fencing was too often conducted served to increase the existing irritation. It was only too evident that the Commission had triumphed, and some of the members could justly boast that they had drowned the deputies in ink, and buried them under reams of paper.

Believing, or at least professing to believe, that the Emperor was being deceived in this matter by the Administration, several groups of deputies presented petitions to his Majesty containing a respectful protest against the manner in which they had been treated. But by this act they simply laid themselves open to "the most unkindest cut of all." Those who had signed the petitions received a formal reprimand through the police!

This treatment of the deputies, and, above all, this gratuitous insult, produced among the nobles a storm of indignation. They felt that they had been entrapped! The Government had artfully induced them to form projects for the emancipation of their serfs, and now, after having been used as a cat's-paw in the work of their own spoliation, they were being unceremoniously pushed aside as no longer necessary! Those who had indulged in the hope of gaining political rights felt the blow most keenly. A first gentle and respectful attempt at remonstrance had been answered by a dictatorial reprimand through the police! Instead of being called to take an active part in home and foreign politics, they were being treated as naughty schoolboys. In view of this insult all differences of opinion were for the moment forgotten, and all parties resolved to join in a vigorous protest against the insolence and arbitrary conduct of the bureaucracy.

A convenient opportunity of making this protest in a legal way was offered by the triennial Provincial Assemblies soon about to be held in several provinces. So at least it was thought, but here again the Administration checkmated the noblesse. Before the opening of the Assemblies a circular was issued prohibiting them

from touching the Emancipation question! Some Assemblies, however, evaded this order, and succeeded in making a little demonstration by submitting to his Majesty that the time had arrived for other reforms, such as the separation of the administrative and judicial powers, and the creation of local self-government, public judicial procedure, and trial by jury.

All these reforms were voluntarily effected by the Emperor a few years later, but the manner in which they were suggested seemed to savor of insubordination, and was a flagrant infraction of the principle that all initiative in public affairs should proceed from the central Government. New measures of repression were accordingly used. Some Marshals of Noblesse were reprimanded and others deposed. Of the conspicuous leaders two were exiled to distant provinces and others placed under the surveillance of the police. Worst of all, the whole agitation strengthened the Commission by convincing the Emperor that the majority of the nobles were hostile to his benevolent plans.*

When the Commission had finished its labors, its chief project passed to the two higher instances—the Committee for Peasant Affairs and the Council of State—and in both of these the Emperor declared plainly that he could allow no fundamental changes. From all the members he demanded a complete forgetfulness of former differences and a conscientious execution of his orders; “for you must remember,” he significantly added, “that in Russia laws are made by the autocratic power.” From an historical review of the question he drew the conclusion that “the autocratic power created serfage, and the autocratic power ought to abolish it.” [On the 19th February, 1861, the law was signed, and by that act more than twenty millions of serfs were liberated.† A Manifesto containing the fundamental principles of the

* This was a misinterpretation of the facts. Very many of those who joined in the protest sincerely sympathized with the idea of Emancipation, and were ready to be even more “liberal” than the Government.

† It is sometimes said—as, for instance, by Mr. Gladstone, in the *Contemporary Review* for November, 1876—that forty millions of serfs have been emancipated. The statement is true, if we regard the State Peasants as serfs. They held, as I have already explained, an intermediate position between serfage and freedom. The peculiar administration under which they lived was partly abolished by Imperial Orders of September 7th, 1859, and October 23rd, 1861. In 1866 they were placed, as regards administration, on a

law was at once sent all over the country, and an order was given that it should be read in all the churches.

[The three fundamental principles laid down by the law were:—

1. That the serfs should at once receive the civil rights of the free rural classes, and that the authority of the proprietor should be replaced by Communal self-government.

2. That the rural Communes should as far as possible retain the land they actually held, and should in return pay to the proprietor certain yearly dues in money or labor.

3. That the Government should by means of credit assist the Communes to redeem these dues, or, in other words, to purchase the lands ceded to them in usufruct.]

With regard to the domestic serfs, it was enacted that they should continue to serve their masters during two years, and that thereafter they should be completely free, but they should have no claim to a share of the land.

It might be reasonably supposed that the serfs received with boundless gratitude and delight the Manifesto proclaiming these principles. Here at last was the realization of their long-cherished hopes. Liberty was accorded to them, and not only liberty, but a goodly portion of the soil—more than a half of all the arable land possessed by the proprietors.

[In reality the Manifesto created among the peasantry a feeling of disappointment rather than delight.] To understand this strange fact we must endeavor to place ourselves at the peasant's point of view.

[In the first place it must be remarked that all vague, rhetorical phrases about free labor, human dignity, national progress, and the like, which may readily produce among educated men a certain amount of temporary enthusiasm, fall on the ears of the Russian peasant like drops of rain on a granite rock. The fashionable rhetoric of philosophical liberalism is as incomprehensible to him as the flowery circumlocutionary style of an Oriental scribe would be to a keen city merchant. The idea of liberty in the abstract and the mention of rights which lie beyond the sphere of his ordinary everyday life awaken no enthusiasm in his breast.] And

level with the emancipated serfs of the proprietors. As a general rule, they possess rather more land and have to pay somewhat lighter dues than the emancipated serfs in the narrower sense of the term.

for mere names he has a profound indifference. What matters it to him that he is officially called, not a "serf," but a "free village inhabitant," if the change in official terminology is not accompanied by some immediate material advantage? What he wants is a house to live in, food to eat, and raiment wherewithal to be clothed, and to gain these first necessities of life with as little labor as possible. If, therefore, the Government would make a law by which his share of the Communal land would be increased, or his share of the Communal burdens diminished, he would in return willingly consent to be therein designated by the most ugly name that learned ingenuity could devise. Thus the sentimental considerations which had such an important influence on the educated classes had no hold whatever on the mind of the peasants. They looked at the question exclusively from two points of view—that of historical right and that of material advantage—and from both of these the Emancipation Law seemed to offer no satisfactory solution of the question.

On the subject of historical right the peasantry had their own traditional conceptions, which were completely at variance with the written law. According to the positive legislation the Communal land formed part of the estate, and consequently belonged to the proprietor; but according to the conceptions of the peasantry it belonged to the Commune, and the right of the proprietor consisted merely in that personal authority over the serfs which had been conferred on him by the Tsar. The peasants could not, of course, put these conceptions into a strict legal form, but they often expressed them in their own homely laconic way by saying to their master, "*Mui vashi no zemlyá nasha*"—that is to say, "We are yours, but the land is ours." And it must be admitted that this view, though legally untenable, had a certain historical justification.* In old times the nobles had held their land by feudal tenure, and were liable to be ejected as soon as they did not fulfill their obligations to the State. These obligations had been long since abolished, and the feudal tenure transformed into an unconditional right of property, but the peasants clung to the old ideas in a way that strikingly illustrates the vitality of deep-rooted popular conceptions. In their minds the proprietors were merely temporary occupants, who were allowed by the Tsar to exact labor

* See preceding chapter, page 460.

and dues from the serfs. What then was Emancipation? Certainly the abolition of all obligatory labor and money dues, and perhaps the complete ejection of the proprietors. On this latter point there was a difference of opinion. All assumed, as a matter of course, that the Communal land would remain the property of the Commune, but it was not so clear what would be done with the rest of the estate. Some thought that it would be retained by the proprietor, but very many believed that the nobles would receive salaries from the Tsar, and that *all* the land would be given to the Communes. In this way the Emancipation would be in accordance with historical right and with the material advantage of the peasantry, for whose exclusive benefit, it was assumed, the reform had been undertaken.

[Instead of this the peasants found that they were still to pay dues, even for the Communal land which they regarded as unquestionably their own! So at least said the expounders of the law. But the thing was incredible. Either the proprietors must be concealing or misinterpreting the law, or this was merely a preparatory measure, which would be followed by the real Emancipation. Thus were awakened among the peasantry a spirit of mistrust and suspicion and a widespread belief that there would be a second Emancipation, by which all the land would be divided and all the dues abolished.]

On the nobles the Manifesto made a very different impression. The fact that they were to be intrusted with the putting of the law into execution, and the flattering allusions made to the spirit of generous self-sacrifice which they had exhibited, kindled amongst them enthusiasm enough to make them forget for a time their just grievances and their hostility towards the bureaucracy.

[They found that the conditions on which the Emancipation was effected were by no means so ruinous as they had anticipated; and the Emperor's appeal to their generosity and patriotism made many of them throw themselves with ardor into the important task confided to them.]

Unfortunately they could not at once begin the work. [The law had been so hurried through the last stages that the preparations for putting it into execution were by no means complete when the Manifesto was published. The task of regulating the future relations between the proprietors and the peasantry was intrusted to local proprietors in each district, who were to be called Arbiters of

the Peace (*Mirovuić Posrédniki*) ; but three months elapsed before these Arbiters could be appointed. During that time there was no one to explain the law to the peasants and settle the disputes between them and the proprietors ; and the consequence of this was that many cases of insubordination and disorder occurred.] The peasants naturally imagined that, as soon as the Tsar said they were free, they were no longer obliged to work for their old masters—that all obligatory labor ceased as soon as the Manifesto was read. In vain the proprietors endeavored to convince them that, in regard to labor, the old relations must continue, as the law enjoined, until a new arrangement had been made. To all explanations and exhortations the peasants turned a deaf ear, and to the efforts of the rural police they too often opposed a dogged, passive resistance. In many cases the simple appearance of the authorities sufficed to restore order, for the presence of one of the Tsar's servants convinced many that the order to work for the present as formerly was not a mere invention of the proprietors. But not unfrequently the birch had to be applied. [Indeed, I am inclined to believe, from the numerous descriptions of this time which I have received from eye-witnesses, that rarely, if ever, had the serfs seen and experienced so much flogging as during these first three months after their liberation. Sometimes even the troops had to be called out, and on three occasions they fired on the peasants with ball cartridge. In the most serious case, where a young peasant had set up for a prophet and declared that the Emancipation Law was a forgery, fifty-one peasants were killed and seventy-seven were more or less seriously wounded.] But in spite of these lamentable incidents, there was nothing which even the most violent alarmist could dignify with the name of an insurrection. Nowhere was there anything that could be called organized resistance. Even in the case above alluded to, the 3,000 peasants on whom the troops fired were entirely unarmed, made no attempt to resist, and dispersed in the utmost haste as soon as they discovered that they were being shot down. Had the military authorities shown a little more judgment, tact, and patience, the history of the Emancipation would not have been stained even with those three solitary cases of unnecessary bloodshed.

This interregnum between the reigns of serfage and liberty was brought to an end by the appointment of the Arbiters of the Peace. Their first duty was to explain the law, and to organize

the new self-government of the peasantry. The lowest instance or primary organ of this self-government, the rural Commune, already existed, and at once recovered much of its ancient vitality as soon as the authority and interference of the proprietors were removed. The second instance, the Vólost—a territorial administrative unit comprising several contiguous Communes—had to be created, for nothing of the kind had previously existed on the estates of the nobles. It had existed, however, for nearly a quarter of a century among the peasants of the Demesnes, and it was therefore necessary merely to copy an already existing model.

As soon as all the Vólosts in his district had been thus organized, the Arbiter had to undertake the much more arduous task of regulating the agrarian relations between the proprietors and the Communes—with the individual peasants, be it remembered, the proprietors had no direct relations whatever. It had been enacted by the law that the future agrarian relations between the two parties should be left, as far as possible, to voluntary contract; and accordingly each proprietor was invited to come to an agreement with the Commune or Communes on his estate. On the ground of this agreement a statute-charter (*ustávnaya grámota*) was prepared, specifying the number of male serfs, the quantity of land actually enjoyed by them, any proposed changes in this amount, the dues proposed to be levied, and other details. If the Arbiter found that the conditions were in accordance with the law and clearly understood by the peasants, he confirmed the charter, and the arrangement was complete. When the two parties could not come to an agreement within a year, he prepared a charter according to his own judgment, and presented it for confirmation to the higher authorities.

The dissolution of partnership, if it be allowed to use such a term, between the proprietor and his serfs was sometimes very easy and sometimes very difficult. On many estates the charter did little more than legalize the existing arrangements, but in many instances it was necessary to add to, or subtract from, the amount of Communal land, and sometimes it was even necessary to remove the village to another part of the estate. In all cases there were, of course, conflicting interests and complicated questions, so that the Arbiter had always abundance of difficult work. Besides this, he had to act as mediator in those differences which naturally arose during the transition period, when the authority of the proprietor

had been abolished but the separation of the two classes had not yet been effected. The unlimited patriarchial authority which had been formerly wielded by the proprietor or his steward now passed with certain restrictions into the hands of the Arbiters, and these peacemakers had to spend a great part of their time in driving about from one estate to another to put an end to alleged cases of insubordination—some of which, it must be admitted, existed only in the imagination of the proprietors.

[At first the work of amicable settlement proceeded slowly. The proprietors generally showed a spirit of concession, and some of them generously proposed conditions much more favorable to the peasants than the law demanded; but the peasants were filled with vague suspicions, and feared to commit themselves by "putting pen to paper."] Even the highly-respected proprietors, who imagined that they possessed the unbounded confidence of the peasantry, were suspected like the others, and their generous offers were regarded as well-baited traps. Often I have heard old men, sometimes with tears in their eyes, describe the distrust and ingratitude of the peasantry at this time. [Many peasants believed that the proprietors were hiding the real Emancipation Law, and imaginative or ill-intentioned persons fostered this belief by professing to know what the real law contained.] The most absurd rumors were afloat, and whole villages sometimes acted upon them. In the province of Moscow, for instance, one Commune sent a deputation to the proprietor to inform him that, as he had always been a good master, the *Mir* would allow him to retain his house and garden during his lifetime. In another locality it was rumored that the Tsar sat daily on a golden throne in the Crimea, receiving all peasants who came to him, and giving them as much land as they desired; and in order to take advantage of the Imperial liberality a large body of peasants set out for the place indicated, and advanced quickly till they were stopped by the military!

As an illustration of the illusions in which the peasantry indulged at this time, I may introduce here one of the many characteristic incidents related to me by gentlemen who had served as Arbiters of the Peace.

In the province of Riazán there was one Commune which had acquired a certain local notoriety for the obstinacy with which it refused all arrangements with the proprietor. My informant, who was Arbiter for the locality, was at last obliged to make a statute-

charter for it without its consent. He wished, however that the peasants should voluntarily accept the arrangement he proposed, and accordingly called them together to talk with them on the subject. After explaining fully the part of the law which related to their case, he asked them what objection they had to make a fair contract with their old master. For some time he received no answer, but gradually by questioning individuals he discovered the cause of their obstinacy: they were firmly convinced that not only the Communal land, but also the rest of the estate, belonged to them. To eradicate this false idea he set himself to reason with them, and the following characteristic dialogue ensued:—

[*Arbiter.* “If the Tsar gave all the land to the peasantry, what compensation could he give to the proprietors to whom the land belongs?”

Peasant. “The Tsar will give them salaries according to their service.”

Arbiter. “In order to pay these salaries he would require a great deal more money. Where could he get that money? He would have to increase the taxes, and in that way you would have to pay all the same.”

Peasant. “The Tsar can make as much money as he likes.”

Arbiter. “If the Tsar can make as much money as he likes, why does he make you pay the poll-tax every year?”

Peasant. “It is not the Tsar that receives the taxes we pay.”

Arbiter. “Who then receives them?”

Peasant (after a little hesitation, and with a knowing smile). “The officials, of course!”]

Gradually, through the efforts of the Arbiters, the peasants came to know better their real position, and the work began to advance more rapidly. But soon it was checked by another influence. By the end of the first year the “liberal,” patriotic enthusiasm of the nobles had cooled. All the sentimental idyllic tendencies had melted away at the first touch of reality, and those who had imagined that liberty would have an immediately salutary effect on the moral character of the serfs confessed themselves disappointed. Many complained that the peasants showed themselves greedy and obstinate, stole wood from the forest, allowed their cattle to wander on the proprietor’s fields, failed to fulfill their legal obligations, and broke their voluntary engagements. At the same time the fears of an agrarian rising subsided, so that

even the timid were tranquilized. From these causes the conciliatory spirit of the proprietors decreased.

The work of conciliating and regulating was thus extremely difficult, but the great majority of the Arbiters showed themselves equal to the task, and displayed an impartiality, tact, and patience beyond all praise. To them Russia is in great part indebted for the peaceful character of the Emancipation. Had they sacrificed the general good to the interests of their class, or had they habitually acted in that stern, administrative, military spirit which caused the instances of bloodshed above referred to, the prophecies of the alarmists would, in all probability, have been realized, and the historian of the Emancipation would have had a terrible list of judicial massacres to record. [Fortunately they played the part of mediators, as their name signified, rather than that of administrators in the bureaucratic sense of the term, and they were animated with a just and humane rather than a merely legal spirit. Instead of simply laying down the law, and ordering their decisions to be immediately executed, they were ever ready to spend hours in trying to conquer, by patient and laborious reasoning, the unjust claims of proprietors or the false conceptions and ignorant obstinacy of the peasants.] It was a new spectacle for Russia to see a public function filled by conscientious men who had their heart in their work, who sought neither promotion nor decorations, and who paid less attention to the punctilious observance of prescribed formalities than to the real objects in view.

There were, it is true, a few men to whom this description does not apply. Some of these were unduly under the influence of the feelings and conceptions created by serfage. Some, on the contrary, erred on the other side. Desirous of securing the future welfare of the peasantry and of gaining for themselves a certain kind of popularity, and at the same time animated with a violent spirit of pseudo-liberalism, these latter occasionally forgot that their duty was to be, not generous, but just, and that they had no right to practice generosity at other people's expense. All this I am quite aware of—I could even name one or two Arbiters who were guilty of positive dishonesty—but I hold that these were rare exceptions. The great majority did their duty faithfully and well.

[The work of concluding contracts for the redemption of the dues, or, in other words, for the purchase of the land ceded in perpetual usufruct, proceeded slowly, and is, in fact, still going

on.] The arrangement was as follows: The dues were capitalized at six per cent., and the Government paid at once to the proprietors four-fifths of the whole sum. The peasants were to pay to the proprietor the remaining fifth, either at once or in installments, and to the Government six per cent. for forty-nine years on the sum advanced. The proprietors willingly adopted this arrangement, for it provided them with a sum of ready money, and freed them from the difficult task of collecting the dues. But the peasants did not show much desire to undertake the operation. [Some of them expected a second emancipation, and those who did not take this possibility into their calculations were little disposed to make present sacrifices for distant prospective advantages which would not be realized for half a century.] In most cases the proprietor was obliged to remit, in whole or in part, the fifth which was to be paid by the peasants. Many Communes refused to undertake the operation on any conditions, and in consequence of this not a few proprietors demanded the so-called obligatory redemption, according to which they accepted the four-fifths from the Government as full payment, and the operation was thus effected without the peasants being consulted. [The total number of *male* serfs emancipated was about nine millions and three-quarters,* and of these, only about seven millions and a quarter had already, at the beginning of 1875, made redemption contracts. Of the contracts signed at that time, about sixty-three per cent. were "obligatory."]

The serfs were thus not only liberated, but also made possessors of land and put on the road to becoming Communal proprietors, and the old Communal institutions were preserved and developed. [In answer to the question, Who effected this gigantic reform? we may say that the chief merit undoubtedly belongs to the Emperor. Had he not possessed a very great amount of energy he would neither have raised the question nor allowed it to be raised by others, and had he not shown a decision and energy of which no one suspected him to be capable, the solution would have been indefinitely postponed.] Among the members of his own family he found an able and energetic assistant in his brother, the Grand Duke Constantine—a man who would be remarkable in any sphere of life—and a warm sympathizer with the cause in the Grand Duch-

* This does not include the domestic serfs, who did not receive land.

ess Helena, a German Princess, thoroughly devoted to the welfare of her adopted country. But we must not overlook the important part played by the nobles. Their conduct was very characteristic. As soon as the question was raised, a large number of proprietors threw themselves enthusiastically into the work, and as soon as it became evident that emancipation was inevitable, all made a holocaust of their ancient rights, and demanded to be liberated at once from all relations with the serfs. And when the law was passed it was the proprietors who faithfully put it into execution. [Lastly, we should remember that considerable merit is due to the peasantry for the patience and long-suffering which they displayed, as soon as they understood the law. Thus it may justly be said that the Emancipation was not the work of one man, or one party, or one class, but of the nation as a whole.*]

* The names most commonly associated with the Emancipation are General Rostóftsef, Lanskói (Minister of the Interior), Nicholas Milútín, Prince Tcherkassky, G. Samárin, Kosheléf. Many others, such as I. A. Soloviéf, Zhukofski, Domontovitch, Girs, are less known, but did valuable work. To all of these, with the exception of the first two, who died before my arrival in Russia, I have to confess my obligations. The late Nicholas Milútín rendered me special service by putting at my disposal not only all the official papers in his possession, but also many documents of a more private kind. By his early and lamented death Russia lost one of the greatest statesmen which she has yet produced.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE EMANCIPATION.

A.—FOR THE LANDED PROPRIETORS.

Difficulties—The Problem simplified—Direct Compensation—Indirect Compensation—One Good Result of the Emancipation—Four Systems of Farming with Free Labor—Which Systems are adopted—Present Condition of Estates in the Northern and Southern Zones—Prince Victor Wasiltchikof—A Typical Instance—Southern Section of the Black-Earth Zone—Sheep-farming and *Mercanti di Campagna*—Aridity of the Climate—Scarcity of Good Laborers—"Peasant Laziness"—General Conclusions.

THERE is, perhaps, no more difficult task for the social historian than that of describing clearly and graphically a chaotic period of transition when the old legal and social relations and the old modes of life have been ruthlessly swept away by a revolutionary or a legislative hurricane, and the new *modus vivendi* has not yet become clearly defined. And the difficulty is especially great if the transition process is still going on; for so long as it is uncertain what kind of stable order will be ultimately evolved from the fermenting chaos, it is almost impossible to distinguish the essential from the casual and to determine accurately the relative importance and real significance of the phenomena observed.

In beginning to speak of the results of the Emancipation, I am painfully conscious of this difficulty. The agrarian relations are still in a transitory, chaotic state, and it is impossible to predict with confidence what form they will ultimately assume. The Emancipation must be regarded as a gigantic experiment in social science, and as an experiment which is still far from being terminated. The necessary ingredients have been put together, but *Natura naturans* has not yet played her part in the operation. All that I can do, therefore, is to describe the most important re-

sults already obtained, and give a few indications as to the probable future. And even in this modest task I must claim the reader's indulgence, for the materials which I have been able to collect are far from being complete. My own personal observations have been necessarily confined to particular localities, and the literature which exists on the subject is most crude and fragmentary. Though numerous descriptions of particular estates and particular localities have been already published in the periodical literature and elsewhere, no one has yet, so far as I am aware, made a serious attempt to group the multifarious facts described, and reconcile the conflicting statements of the witnesses.*

In the present chapter I shall consider the subject from the point of view of the landed proprietors.

When the Emancipation question was raised at the commencement of the present reign, there was a considerable diversity of opinion as to the effect which the abolition of serfage would have on the material interests of the landowners. The Press in general, and a large number of those who may be called "the young generation," took an optimistic view of the matter, and endeavored to prove that the proposed change would be beneficial alike to proprietors and to peasants. Science, it was said, has long since decided that free labor is immensely more productive than slavery or serfage, and the principle has been already proved to demonstration in the countries of Western Europe. In all these countries modern agricultural progress began with the emancipation of the serfs, and increased productivity was everywhere the immediate result of improvements in the method of culture. Thus the poor light soils of Germany, France, and Holland have been made to pro-

* I ought, perhaps, to except the oft-quoted official report of the Imperial Commission instituted in 1872 under the auspices of Mr. Valúyef, the Minister of Imperial Demesnes. As I took part in an unofficial capacity in the collection of the materials for this commission, I can bear testimony to the painstaking and conscientious efforts of at least one (Mr. Tchaslavski) of the members who were intrusted with the task of collecting the necessary information, and I have no doubt that the others fulfilled their duties in a similar spirit; but it seems to me that the conclusions of the committee are far from giving a complete and thoroughly trustworthy picture of the present agrarian condition of Russia. The report contains, however, much valuable material, and I gladly take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to Mr. Valúyef for his having kindly supplied me with a copy not only of the report, but also of the materials on which it is founded.

duce more than the vaunted "black earth" of Russia. And from these ameliorations the landowning class has everywhere derived the chief advantages. Are not the landed proprietors of England—the country in which serfage was first abolished—the richest in the world? And is not the proprietor of a few hundred *morgen* in Germany often richer than the Russian noble who has thousands of *dessyatines*? By these and similar plausible arguments the Press endeavored to prove to the proprietors that they ought, even in their own interest, to undertake the emancipation of the serfs. Many proprietors, however, showed little faith in the abstract principles of political economy and the vague teachings of history as interpreted by the contemporary periodical literature. They could not always refute the ingenious arguments adduced by the men of more sanguine temperament, but they felt convinced that their prospects were not nearly so bright as these men represented them to be. They believed that Russia was a peculiar country, and the Russians a peculiar people. The lower classes in England, France, Holland, and Germany were well known to be laborious and enterprising, whilst the Russian peasant was notoriously lazy, and would certainly, if left to himself, not do more work than was absolutely necessary to keep him from starving. Free labor might be more profitable than serfage in countries where the upper classes possessed traditional practical knowledge and abundance of capital, but in Russia the proprietors had neither the practical knowledge nor the ready money necessary to make the proposed ameliorations in the system of agriculture, as was clearly shown by the frequent unsuccessful attempts in recent years to introduce the more simple agricultural machines. To all this it was added that a system of emancipation by which the peasants should receive land and be made completely independent of the landed proprietors, had nowhere been tried on such a large scale.

There were thus two diametrically opposite opinions regarding the influence which the abolition of serfage would have on the material interests of the landowners, and we have now to examine which of these two opinions has been confirmed by experience.

The reader who has never attempted to make investigations of this kind may naturally imagine that the question may be easily decided by simply consulting a large number of individual proprietors, and drawing a general conclusion from their evidence.

In reality the task is much more difficult. As a rule the proprietors cannot state clearly how much they have lost or gained, and when definite information is obtained from them, it is not always trustworthy. In the time of serfage very few of them were in the habit of keeping accurate accounts or accounts of any kind, and when they lived on their estates there were a very large number of items which could not possibly be reduced to figures. Many a man receives now a much larger revenue in money than formerly, and yet he is in a certain sense poorer—that is to say, he finds it much more difficult to live in ease and plenty. Of course every proprietor has a general idea as to whether his position is now better or worse than it was in the old times, but the vague statements which one often hears made by individuals regarding their former and their actual revenues have little or no scientific value. So many considerations which have nothing to do with purely agrarian relations enter into the calculations, that the conclusions do not help us much in our endeavors to estimate the economic results of the Emancipation. And the testimony, it must be confessed, is by no means always unbiassed—especially when it is given to a foreigner. Of those who speak of the Emancipation in an epic or dithyrambic tone, I have noticed that there are two categories: the one desire to prove that the measure was a complete success in every way, and that all classes were benefited by it not only morally but also materially, whilst the others strive to represent the proprietors in general, and themselves in particular, as the self-sacrificing victims of a great and necessary patriotic reform—as martyrs in the cause of liberty and progress. I do not for a moment suppose that these two groups of witnesses have a clearly-conceived intention of deceiving or misleading, but the cautious investigator ought of course to avoid attributing to their testimony more value than it deserves.

We may greatly simplify the problem, as it seems to me, by reducing it to two definite questions:—

1. How far were the proprietors *directly* indemnified for the loss of serf labor and for the transfer in usufruct of a large part of their estates to the peasantry?
2. What have the proprietors done with the remainder of their estates, and how far have they been *indirectly* indemnified by the economic changes which have taken place since—and to some extent independently of—the Emancipation?

To the former of these two questions it may be objected that the nobles voluntarily gave up their authority over the peasantry, and received no compensation whatever for the loss of serf labor ; and in proof of this assertion several official utterances might be quoted. In reality, however, as I have already explained in a former chapter, many proprietors received actually, if not formally, a considerable amount of compensation ; for the legislative power intentionally imposed on a large section of the peasantry annual dues exceeding the normal rent of the land which was transferred to them without their consent.

The problem will be still further simplified if we distinguish carefully between two great agricultural regions. The Forest Zone* may be entirely left out of account, for it contained almost no serf-owning landed proprietors. In the whole of the vast province of Archangel, for instance, and in the northern part of the province of Vologda, there were at the time of the Emancipation only six serfs, and they all belonged to nobles who did not possess estates.

Let us begin then with the Southern Agricultural or Black-Earth Zone, and endeavor to determine how far the proprietors received a fitting compensation for the loss of serf labor and for the compulsory cession of part of their estates to the emancipated peasantry.

In the northern section of this zone, where the Three-field system of agriculture was in use, the conditions were very favorable for the abolition of serfage. The soil was naturally rich, and still contained a great part of its virgin fertility, so that it could easily supply much more grain than was necessary for the wants of the inhabitants. The agricultural population was sufficient for the cultivation of the land, according to the existing mode of agriculture, and the amount of land ceded to the serfs for their own use might be regarded as a fair remuneration for the labor which they supplied to the owner of the estate. Any proprietor, therefore, who had not been in the habit of imposing undue burdens on his serfs might have liberated them and taken back the land which they enjoyed in usufruct, and he would in all probability have found that he had not thereby made any pecuniary sacrifice. His former serfs would have become his farm-laborers, or would have rented his land for a fair annual sum ; and the revenues of

* For this and similar terms, see Map at end of this volume.

the estate would probably have been under this new arrangement at least as large as before. And it must be remarked that this is no mere fanciful supposition. I know of several cases where men who belonged to the merchant class, and who consequently had not the legal right to possess serfs, bought estates and farmed them with a fair profit. In short, the economic conditions in this region were such that serfage was little, if at all, more profitable than free labor, and therefore we may conclude that for the loss of serf labor the proprietors did not require any compensation. As to the dues, they did not, perhaps, quite represent the full value of the land ceded to the Communes, but the difference between the real and the assumed value was not great. If the proprietors had any just ground of complaint, it was that the inevitable rise in the price of land, which many of them clearly foresaw, was not taken into account.

In the southern section of this zone, where the Steppe system of agriculture was practiced, the economic conditions were somewhat different.* The population was not nearly so dense, and the supply of labor was consequently not equal to the demand. Serfage had therefore a considerable value, and the landowners were not at all indemnified for its abolition, for the peasants of this region received a large quantity of land, and certainly did not require to pay more for it than it was worth.

Passing now to the Northern Agricultural Zone, we find that the labor of the serfs was for other reasons still more necessary for the proprietors. Here the soil was poor, and so much exhausted that it did not give a fair remuneration for the labor expended on it. So far, therefore, as the proprietors were concerned, agriculture was founded, not on the natural economic conditions, but on the artificial basis of serf labor. Thus the proprietors, in being deprived of serf labor, were deprived of their most valuable possession; but they were partly indemnified for this loss by the annual dues, which greatly exceeded the normal rent of the land ceded to the Communes.

* The Steppe system of agriculture has been briefly described in ch. xxiv. Crops are raised without manure during from three to six successive years, and then the land is allowed to lie fallow for at least twice that period, in order that the soil may recover something of its previous fertility. The system can of course be used only where land is superabundant, and it must always in the long run exhaust the soil.

In the central part of this region, serfage had not only outlived its time, but had lost to a great extent its original character, and had entered on a new stage of development. In the original, normal form of the institution—if I may use such an expression—the peasants tilled the proprietor's land, and received as a remuneration for the labor supplied a certain quantity of land for their own use. In the form which it had assumed in these north-central provinces, the proprietor no longer employed all his serfs for agriculture, but allowed a large part of them to gain a living by other occupations, on condition of their paying him a fixed yearly sum (*obrók*) as a substitute for the field labor which he did not require. For such proprietors the emancipation of the serfs without compensation would of course have been ruinous. To prevent this it was decided that all the peasants—even those who lived by non-agricultural occupations—should be obliged to accept land, and to pay for it dues exceeding the normal rent.

Thus, we see, in the Northern Agricultural Zone, the proprietors received a certain compensation for the loss of serf labor in the annual dues imposed on the peasantry by the Emancipation Law. It must be added, however, that this compensation was not nearly so great as it seemed. The proprietor found it always difficult, and often utterly impossible, to collect the dues; and he had reason to fear that the peasants, in accordance with the permission granted to them by the Law, would, at the expiry of the first nine years, entirely liberate themselves from these dues by emigrating to the towns or to more fertile parts of the country. The only way he had of escaping from these difficulties and dangers lay in demanding the so-called obligatory redemption of the land (*obiazatelny vuikup*), and in adopting this expedient he had to make considerable sacrifices. In the first place, as he demanded the redemption of the land without obtaining the consent of the peasants, he had to accept four-fifths of the sum as full payment; and in the second place, a large part of the four-fifths was paid to him, not in money, but in Government bonds,* which rapidly fell—on account of the enormous number of them which were simultaneously thrown on the market—to eighty per cent. of their nominal value. Thus, instead of receiving 150 roubles from each of his male peasants, he received only 130

* These bonds bore interest at five per cent.

roubles nominally, and considerably less in reality, unless he could wait for fifteen years—the term fixed for the replacing of the Government bonds by bank-notes. And even of this diminished sum many proprietors actually received only a small portion, for the Treasury paid to itself all claims which it had on the estates, and handed over merely the balance.

Let us now pass to the second part of the problem: What have the proprietors done with the part of their estates which remained to them after ceding the required amount of land to the Communes? Have they been indirectly indemnified for the loss of serf labor by the economic changes which have taken place since the Emancipation? How far have they succeeded in making the transition from serfage to free labor, and what revenues do they now derive from their estates? The answer to these questions will necessarily contain some account of the present economic position of the proprietors.

On all proprietors the Emancipation had at least one good effect: it dragged them forcibly from the old path of indolence and routine, and compelled them to think and calculate regarding their affairs. The hereditary listlessness and apathy, the traditional habit of looking on the estate with its serfs as a kind of self-acting machine which must always spontaneously supply the owner with the means of living, the inveterate practice of spending all ready money, and of taking little heed for the morrow—all this, with much that resulted from it, was rudely swept away and became a thing of the past. The broad, easy road on which the proprietors had hitherto let themselves be borne along by the force of circumstances suddenly split up into a number of narrow, arduous, thorny paths. Each one had now to use his judgment to determine which of the paths he should adopt, and, having made his choice, he had to struggle along as he best could. I remember once asking a proprietor what effect the Emancipation had had on the class to which he belonged, and he gave me an answer which is worth recording. "Formerly," he said, "we kept no accounts and drank champagne; now we keep accounts and content ourselves with beer." Like all epigrammatic sayings, this laconic reply is far from giving a complete description of reality, but it indicates in a graphic way a change that has unquestionably taken place. As soon as serfage was abolished it was no longer possible to live like "the flowers of the field." Many a

proprietor who had formerly vegetated in apathetic ease had to ask himself the question: How am I now to gain a living? All had to consider what was the most profitable way of employing the land that remained to them. Some change had to be made, and one such change inevitably brings others in its train. When the boulder which has stood immovable for ages on the hill-side has once been disimbedded and begins to roll downwards, it acquires force as it proceeds, and advances with ever-increasing rapidity.

"What am I to do with the land that remains in my possession?" This was the question which each proprietor had to put to himself.

For those who did not live on their estates, or who did not wish to farm on their own account, the simplest way of solving the difficulty was to let the land to the peasants for a fixed yearly sum. This system had the advantage of removing all trouble and risk, but it had one serious disadvantage: when the peasants rent land they invariably practice what the Germans aptly call "*Raubwirthschaft*"—that is to say, they cultivate badly and exhaust the land by recklessly extracting from it as much as possible. In spite, therefore, of immediate advantages, the system is in the long run disadvantageous to the landowners; for in Russia there is no class of men corresponding to the farmers in England, who rent farms and work them without exhausting the soil.

For those who wished to farm on their own account, four different systems were possible:—

1. Those who had hitherto farmed by serf labor might, if the peasants consented to the arrangement, continue the old system under certain restrictions. Instead of paying dues for the Communal land, the Commune supplied, according to this system, a definite amount of field labor, carefully defined in the Emancipation Law.

2. The second solution was to make an agreement with the Commune, or with individual peasants, according to which a certain definite amount of agricultural work should be executed for a certain fixed sum or for a certain amount of pasturage or firewood. When this system is adopted, the peasants always use their own horses and agricultural implements, and the calculation is made per *dessyatine*, or, as we should say, *per acre*.

3. The third solution was the system commonly known as

métayage—that is to say, a kind of temporary partnership or joint venture, in which the proprietor supplies the land and the seed, and the peasants do all the work with their own horses and implements, the harvest being divided between the contracting parties either equally or in some other proportion previously agreed upon.

4. The fourth solution consisted in hiring agricultural laborers and organizing farms on the model of those in Western Europe. In this way the proprietor broke off all relations with his former serfs.

The more enlightened proprietors clearly perceived that of all these solutions the last-named alone afforded the possibility of making radical ameliorations in the existing system of agriculture, but they at the same time recognized that of all the solutions it was the most difficult to adopt. A large sum of money would have to be expended at once on permanent improvements, and a considerable amount of capital would be required for current expenses. It has been calculated that in England, even when no change of system is contemplated, a tenant who rents a farm of 500 acres ought to expend during the first year and a half about £3,000.* This will give some vague idea of the expenses of scientific farming in the most favorable conditions. In a country like Russia the expenses would be, of course, much greater. And where could the Russian farmers at the time of the Emancipation find such a large amount of capital? The great majority of them had more debts than ready-money. The old institutions for lending money on landed security had been closed, and the new land-credit associations had not yet been formed. To borrow from private capitalists was ruinous, for money was at that time so scarce that ten per cent. was considered a "friendly" rate of interest. The redemption operation, it is true, might be effected, but this did not by any means always supply a sufficient amount; for the Government subtracted the mortgages which lay on the estates, and paid the greater part of the balance in paper that was considerably depreciated. At the same time there were other, and scarcely less serious, obstacles in the way. The proprietors in general possessed little technical knowledge, and had never had any practical experience in scientific farming. A few had scien-

* Stephens, "The Book of the Farm" (Edinburgh and London, 1871), II., p. 443.

tific knowledge and a great many had practical acquaintance with agricultural matters, but the scientific knowledge and the practical experience were rarely found united in one person. Even the few who possessed the requisite capital, knowledge, and experience found the task extremely difficult; for it was impossible at first to find trained agricultural laborers—very often impossible to find the requisite number of laborers of any kind.

Under these circumstances the great mass of the proprietors could not for a moment think seriously of attempting to solve the difficulty in this radical way. Many of them at first did not even attempt the second or third of the solutions above enumerated, but contented themselves with continuing the old system under the restrictions imposed by the Emancipation Law. The practical disadvantages of this system, however, very soon became apparent. If it had been difficult to farm profitably by this method, even when the proprietor had unlimited power over his peasants, it was, of course, infinitely more difficult when he was hampered by endless legislative restrictions, and possessed no direct means of insuring even the fulfillment of his legal rights. When the peasants refused to do as they were ordered—and this occurred very frequently, so long as they had no clear conception of their new rights and obligations—the only remedy lay in complaining to the Arbiter of the Peace; and a complaint of this kind, however well founded it might be, could not be satisfied without much annoyance and serious loss of time. At hay-making and harvest-time a single day's delay might cause very serious loss, and those were precisely the times when the laborers were most likely to absent themselves. They had their own hay or grain to attend to, and knew very well that they would not be very severely punished for not fulfilling their obligations to their former master. In this way the proprietors were soon compelled, by the force of circumstances, to adopt one of the other possible solutions; and the peasants, who likewise found the legal regulations extremely burdensome, willingly consented to the change.

The transition to one of these other solutions was in all cases difficult, but the difficulties were not in all parts of the country equally great. Throughout the whole of the Black-Earth Zone the soil still possessed enough of its natural fertility to make farming profitable, even when practiced according to the old primitive methods, and consequently the proprietors could make gradually,

and according to their own convenience, any ameliorations which they considered necessary. If the proprietor did not wish to farm at all, the neighboring peasantry were always ready to take his land at a fair rent. In the Northern Agricultural Zone, on the contrary, the soil was too much exhausted to repay primitive farming, and the agriculture of the proprietors had been long artificially kept alive by means of serfage. Here, therefore, the proprietors could not continue to farm without making at once radical and permanent improvements on their estates; and from letting the land to the peasantry they could receive but a very small revenue.

This important difference between the two agricultural zones is reflected in the present condition of the landed proprietors and of their estates. In the Northern Zone the proprietors have nearly all given up farming, and let as much of their land as possible to the neighboring peasantry. The houses in which they formerly lived—many of them as *grands seigneurs*—are for the most part deserted and left exposed to the ravages of time, while the owners live in the towns, earning a livelihood in the public service, or in those numerous commercial and industrial undertakings which have sprung up in recent years with such marvelous rapidity. If a moralist were to make a sentimental journey through this part of the country, he would find abundant materials for edifying reflections on the instability of earthly greatness, and the folly of living carelessly from day to day without taking thought for the morrow. In the Southern Zone, on the contrary, the estates now present more activity than formerly. Nearly all the proprietors cultivate at least a part of their property, and can easily let to the neighboring peasantry the land which they do not wish to farm on their own account. Some have adopted the system of *métayage*, others get the field-work done by the peasants at so much per acre, and a considerable number have succeeded in organizing farms with hired laborers on the West-European model. In some of the densely-populated districts the proprietors are in the habit of letting the whole of their land, and derive from this a large revenue. The Russian peasant likes the risk and chances of farming on his own account, and is ready to pay a high rent for land rather than work as a laborer.*

* This has tended to prevent the organizing of farms on the West-European model.

Nearly all the estates on which hired laborers and an improved system of agriculture have been introduced are to be found in the northern part of the Black-Earth Zone. Here the land is fertile, labor comparatively abundant, the climate moderate, and markets for the sale of produce are near at hand. To show that it is quite possible for a proprietor of this locality to make very important improvements, and to obtain thereby a very considerable increase of revenue, I venture to give here a few details regarding a large estate belonging to Prince Victor Wassiltchikof, a gentleman whose name is well known to all who take an interest in the progress of agriculture in Russia. Before the Emancipation the annual net revenue had varied from 4,613 roubles to 21,659 roubles, and a ten years' average gave the sum of 14,350 roubles. After the Emancipation, when rather more than half of the land had been ceded to the peasants, the remainder gave an average revenue of 28,996 roubles—that is to say, more than twice as much as the whole estate had given during the time of serfage. If we add to this the sum annually received for the land ceded to the peasants (7,715 roubles), we find that the annual net revenue derived from the estate amounted to 36,711 roubles—that is to say, two and a half times as much as was obtained before the Emancipation. Did I not fear to fatigue the reader with details, I might describe several analogous cases in which the system of agriculture has been greatly improved and the revenues considerably increased. But we must not from such examples draw any hasty general conclusion, for they illustrate not the rule but the exception. On all the estates which I have in view preparations had been made for the transition from serfage to free labor long before the Emancipation, and the owners were all men of remarkable ability, energy, and perseverance, in addition to which some of them possessed great practical knowledge.* Such men were, unfortunately, few in number. The former life of the nobles had been little favorable to the acquiring of special knowledge of the formation of those habits which tend to make a successful farmer.

As to the proprietors of the ordinary type in this region, I think it may be said that in general their revenues, though they certainly

* A well-known example of this class is Mr. Kosheléf, whom I have already mentioned.

did not increase to such an extent as in the instance above cited, were not seriously diminished by the Emancipation. In all cases, at least, in which I have succeeded in obtaining trustworthy data, I have found an increase rather than a diminution of revenue. Thus, for instance, in the province of Riazán I found a large estate in which all the items of income and expenditure had been noted down carefully in chronological order for a long series of years. By reducing the bulky and confused materials to order I obtained the following result:—During the eight years immediately preceding the Emancipation, the net average revenue amounted to 8,445 roubles; during the four years immediately following the Emancipation it fell to 5,186; and during the next four years it rose to 13,190. The temporary decrease of the revenue during the years immediately following the Emancipation was produced by the temporary disorder to which the reform gave rise.* This case I regard as very typical, because no change was made in the system of culture or in the administration of the estate. The serf who had for many years acted as steward continued to exercise his functions as before, and displayed a very decided repugnance to all kinds of innovations.

On the whole I am inclined to believe that, as a rule, the proprietors of this region receive larger revenues now than they did before the Emancipation; but I am not prepared to say that their material condition has been improved. The cost of living has greatly increased—especially for those who have always lived on their estates—and the work of administration is incomparably more complicated and laborious.

In the southern section of this zone the position of the proprietors was, and is still, somewhat different. The rural population is much less dense, and is composed chiefly of State peasants and foreign colonists, who have plenty of land of their own, and

* This temporary decrease of revenue took place even on the estates of able, energetic proprietors who had foreseen the Emancipation, and had made preparations for it. Thus, in the balance-sheet of one who unquestionably belongs to this class, I find the following statement:—

1857—61	Average net revenue 47,433 roubles.			
1862—66	„	„	„	25,918 „
1867—71	„	„	„	77,369 „

have no reason to become tenants or hired laborers. The large estates generally possessed nothing that could, even with a very wide poetical license, be termed a mansion-house, and were, at the time of the Emancipation, chiefly used for two purposes: either they were used as sheep-farms for the production of merino wool, or they were let to agricultural speculators (*posévtchiki*)—a class of men analogous to the *mercanti di campagna* in some parts of Italy—who raised with the least possible expenditure of labor three or four crops, and then allowed the land to lie fallow for eight or ten years. The smallness of the revenue derived by the proprietors from this method of cultivating the land may be best illustrated by the following fact:—When traveling in 1872 in an outlying district, where the system of speculative wheat-raising is still practised, I found that vast tracts of Crown lands, by far the greater part of which had a rich fertile soil, were let at about threepence per acre (25 *kopéks* per *dessyatine*).*

During the last few years this state of things has been considerably modified, but the change must be attributed only in part and indirectly to the Emancipation. Fine wools have greatly fallen in price, and sheep-farming has consequently become less remunerative. At the same time the extension of railways and the development of the export trade from the coasts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azof have rendered the cultivation of wheat and linseed much more profitable than formerly. Thus sheep-farming and the primitive method of raising wheat practised by the *mercanti di campagna* have been to a great extent replaced by regular agriculture, and the direct consequence of this change has been a considerable rise in the value of land. This rise has not been so great as in some districts of the northern section of the Black-Earth Zone, but it has been sufficient, I believe, to indemnify the proprietors for the losses which they sustained by the Emancipation. It must be confessed, however, that the proprietors of this region who attempt regular farming have still formidable difficulties to contend with, the chief of which are the frequent droughts and the scarcity of labor.

*The district in question is in the south-east part of the province of Samára. I was informed on good authority that one of the speculators of this locality sometimes sows as much as 6,000 *dessyatines*—that is, more than 16,000 acres—of wheat, but I have some difficulty in believing the statement.

The former of these difficulties is commonly believed to be entirely beyond the reach of the husbandman. The aridity of the climate, it is said, is caused by the absence of forests, and can be remedied only by an extensive system of arboriculture; and the Government has, as I have already mentioned, seriously entertained various projects based on this theory. How far the planting of a few hundred or a few thousand acres of artificial forest at a very great expense could perceptibly modify the climate of a country comprising many thousand square miles, I must leave specialists to determine. I may remark, however, that there is a less grandiose and more effective remedy much nearer at hand. It consists simply in deeper plowing and in improving generally the method of cultivation. The Menonite colonists have frequently informed me that they suffer from the frequent droughts much less than the peasants around them, and I cannot explain this otherwise than by the fact that the land is better cultivated by the Menonites than by their neighbors.

The second difficulty is, in a certain sense, more serious than the aridity of the climate. The droughts come only occasionally, whilst the scarcity of laborers is a constant source of trouble. As the difficulty of obtaining good laborers is commonly believed to be the chief obstacle to agricultural progress in all parts of the country, it may be well to make a few general remarks before describing the peculiar difficulties with which the farmers of this region have to contend.

The complaints of the proprietors on this subject all over the country form at present an almost harmonious chorus. The peasants, it is said, since the Emancipation have become lazy, careless, addicted to drunkenness, and shamelessly dishonest with regard to their obligations, so that it is difficult to farm even in the old primitive fashion, and positively impossible to introduce improvements in the methods of culture. And it must be confessed that these and similar accusations are not entirely devoid of foundation. That the Russian peasant generally exerts himself as little as possible, that he pays less attention to the quality than to the quantity of the work, that he often shows a reckless carelessness with regard to his employer's property, that he sometimes takes money in advance and does not conscientiously fulfill his contract, that the majority of the peasants occasionally get drunk, and many of them are ready to commit certain kinds of

theft when they have a favorable opportunity—all this is undoubtedly true, whatever biased theorists and sentimental peasant-admirers may say to the contrary.* And, indeed, it would be strange were it otherwise, for such phenomena are to be found more or less frequently in every country in the world, and must be especially frequent in a country where the intellectual and moral education of the people has been utterly neglected and serfage has been only recently abolished. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the fault is entirely on the side of the peasants, or that these facts form an insurmountable obstacle to the introduction of a rational system of agriculture based on free labor; and it would be not less erroneous to imagine, with the majority of the proprietors, that these difficulties might be greatly diminished, or entirely removed, by greater severity on the part of judges, or by an improved system of passports.

Farming with free labor, like every other department of human activity, requires a certain quantity of knowledge, judgment, prudence, and tact, which no amount of ingenious legislation or judicial severity can successfully replace. In engaging servants in other countries as well as in Russia, it is necessary to make a careful selection, and to put them in such a position that they should value their place and fear to lose it; and when all this has been done, the watchful eye and directing hand of the master should be always present. In a word, servants must be treated, not as machines, but as human beings who are always more inclined to act according to their immediate personal interest than according to the dictates of high morality. This simple truth appears to be very imperfectly understood by the majority of Russian proprietors. They seem to imagine that they have merely to make contracts and give orders, and that they may leave the rest to the intelligence and disinterested integrity of the laborers. From false views of economy they often choose the cheapest

* Amongst themselves Russian peasants are, as a rule, not addicted to thieving, as is proved by the fact that they often leave their doors unlocked when all the inmates of the houses are in the fields; but if the *muzhik* finds in the proprietor's farmyard a piece of iron, or a bit of rope, or any of those things which he constantly requires and has great difficulty in obtaining, he is very apt to pick it up and carry it home. His notions of property with regard to such articles are very similar to those of servants in many other countries with regard to eatables.

laborer, without examining his other qualifications, or they take advantage of the peasant's pecuniary embarrassments, and make contracts with him which he cannot by any possibility fulfill. In spring, for instance, when the peasant has nothing to eat and no money to pay his taxes, they advance him a small quantity of rye-meal or a small sum of money, and demand in return an amount of summer work out of all proportion to the value of the meal or money advanced. The peasant is fully conscious in such cases that the contract is for him very disadvantageous, but what is he to do? He must have food for himself and his family, and the rural authorities are threatening to flog him or sell his cow if he does not pay his arrears. In desperation he accepts the conditions, receives the advance, and so puts off the evil day—consoling himself with the reflection that perhaps (*avos'*) “something may turn up.” When the time comes for the fulfilling of the contract his difficulties reappear in a worse form than before. According to the contract he ought to work nearly the whole summer for the proprietor, and meanwhile he has no food for himself and his family, and no provision for the coming winter. In such a position it is surely not strange that he should seek to evade the contract by every possible means. The proprietor, on the other hand, finds his plans thereby deranged, and raises the cry for more stringent legislation or some ingenious administrative contrivance that will compel the peasants to fulfill their obligations. It is difficult, however, to imagine any legislative or administrative contrivance short of the old system of serfage which could in practice compel the fulfillment of such contracts.

In speaking thus I have no intention of exculpating the peasants who act in the manner above described, and am quite ready to admit that their difficult position is very often the result of their own improvidence. All I mean to assert is, that proprietors who make such contracts and are afterwards disappointed are themselves to blame. They ought to pay for a fair day's work a fair day's wages, and to make only such contracts as are likely in the existing conditions to be voluntarily fulfilled. To make imprudent contracts and trust to the omnipotence of the law for their fulfillment is a policy which in all parts of the world is likely to lead to bankruptcy. Even in England, which is often cited by proprietors of this type as a happy land in which the law is respected and breaches of contract rigorously punished, any farmer

who should be mad enough to adopt the principle of paying for field labor two or three years in advance—as I have known some Russian proprietors do—would very soon be compelled to give up farming, and to choose some other vocation more fitted to his unpractical mind.

That the fault does not lie entirely on the side of the peasants is not a conclusion derived merely from *à priori* reasoning, but a truth fully proved by experience. In all parts of the country I have found that the above complaints are rarely, if ever, made by active, energetic, intelligent agriculturists who live on their estates all the year round: the complainers are chiefly men who seem to imagine that the management of an estate may be left to subordinates, and that farming is an occupation resembling those comfortable places in the public service of which the occupant requires to appear merely on ceremonial occasions. Of the numerous direct testimonies which I might quote on this subject, I restrict myself to that of Prince Wassiltchikof, of whom I have already spoken. He expressly declares that during the space of eight years he had never serious cause for dissatisfaction with the laborers he employed, and that he never once had recourse to the authorities.

As a great deal is said and written about the “incorrigible laziness” of the Russian peasantry, I may make here a few remarks on the subject. The *muzhik* is certainly very slow in his movements—slower even than the English rustic—but the proprietors have little right to reproach him with his indolence. To them he might reply with a very strong argument of the *tu quoque* kind, and to all the other classes the argument might likewise be addressed. The St. Petersburg official, for example, who writes philippics about peasant laziness, considers that for himself attendance at his office for three or four hours—a large part of which is devoted to the unproductive labor of smoking cigarèttes—is a very fair day’s work. The truth is that in Russia the struggle for life is not nearly so intense as in countries more densely populated, and society is so constituted that all can live without very strenuous exertion. The Russians seem, therefore, to the traveler who comes from the West, an indolent, apathetic race. But here, as elsewhere, everything depends on the standard of comparison. If the traveler comes from the East—especially if he has been living for some time among pastoral races—the Russians will appear to him a most energetic and laborious people.

Their character in this respect corresponds to their geographical position : they stand midway between the laborious, painstaking, industrial population of Western Europe and the indolent, undisciplined, spasmodically-energetic pastoral tribes of the Steppe. They are capable of effecting much by vigorous, intermittent effort—witness the peasant at harvest-time, or the St. Petersburg official when some big legislative project has to be presented to the Emperor within a given time—but they have not yet learned regular laborious habits. They might move the world if it could be done by a jerk, but they are still deficient in that calm perseverance and dogged tenacity which characterize the Teutonic race.

To return from this digression, it must be admitted that in the southern section of the Black-Earth Zone the proprietors have peculiar difficulties to contend with. The country, as we have seen, is thinly peopled, and the deficiency in agricultural laborers is only partially supplied by the annual summer migrations from the north. For the preparation of the land and the sowing of the grain the ordinary population suffices; but for the harvest the services of the nomadic reapers are always required, and when the harvest is plentiful the price of labor rises to such an extent that the proprietor has sometimes reason to regret the exceptional bounty of Nature. I know at least of one case where an unusually abundant harvest ruined many farmers. This happened in the province of Samára in the year 1868. The harvest was so abundant that the reaping cost about twenty-five shillings per acre, and the grain was afterwards spoiled by continuous rains, so that the reaping expenses became a dead loss. Even when no casualty happens the reaping expenses often eat up nearly all the profits. To insure themselves against these fluctuations in the price of labor, many proprietors send agents to the north in early spring to hire reapers at a moderate price for the harvest time. These agents have no difficulty in hiring peasants at the fairs, or in making contracts with the rural authorities for the services of the peasants who are in arrear with the payment of their taxes; but their efforts have often in the long run little practical result. The laborers hired do not appear at the time stipulated, or they work merely for a few days, and decamp in a body as soon as they hear that high prices are being given by a neighboring proprietor, or in some other district. Recourse to the authorities is well-nigh

useless, for before any steps can be taken for compelling the peasants to fulfill their contracts the harvest-time is past, and there is of course no possibility of obtaining damages from the defaulters. Those who look to the Government for the cure of all evils think that this might be remedied by the introduction of a more complicated system of passports; but the active, intelligent proprietors seek a more rational and more effectual cure. And these latter, it seems, are on the way to solving the problem. By sowing partly late and partly early wheat, and by the introduction of reaping-machines, they have already made themselves much less dependent on the nomadic reapers. Meanwhile the population is rapidly increasing, so that in all probability before many years the difficulty of obtaining laborers will spontaneously disappear.

Perhaps I may be allowed now, in conclusion, to express a general opinion regarding the economic results of the Emancipation so far as the proprietors are concerned.

The proprietors of the Northern Agricultural Zone incurred serious loss by the abolition of serfage, and have nearly all abandoned agriculture as an unprofitable occupation. A few of them are now beginning anew on a more rational system. Instead of cultivating as much as possible without taking into consideration the labor expended, they restrict themselves to a comparatively small area, and endeavor to cultivate it well. Some declare that they find the result satisfactory, but I believe the profits are too small to induce many proprietors to make the attempt, and it seems to me much more probable that the arable land in this part of the country will gradually pass into the hands of the peasantry, who can often extract a fair revenue from it when the proprietor can only farm it at a loss. Already the process has begun, and it would doubtless go on much more quickly if the purchase of small lots could be effected with fewer formalities and less expense.

The proprietors of the two southern regions, on the contrary, have suffered, I believe, no pecuniary loss by the Emancipation, if the economic changes which have occurred since that event be taken into consideration. Many of them, certainly, receive now much larger revenues than they received in the time of serfage. Those of them who have succeeded in making the requisite alterations find that farming with free labor gives a fair return for the

capital expended, whilst those who do not attempt farming derive a considerable revenue by letting their land to the peasants.

And yet it must be confessed that even in these southern regions many proprietors can say with a certain amount of truth that the Emancipation ruined them. Formerly they lived on their estates in comfort and plenty, or lived in the towns and drew a large revenue from their estates, and now all their landed property has been sold by auction to satisfy the demands of importunate creditors. These facts seem at first to give the lie to what has just been said, but in reality there is here no contradiction. I have never asserted, and had no intention of implying, that the Emancipation saved the foolish proprietors from the consequences of their own folly. In all my remarks I have assumed that the proprietors were solvent at the time of the Emancipation, and that they acted afterwards with a reasonable amount of intelligence and circumspection. The proprietors who did not fulfill these conditions I have hitherto left out of account, and I may now dismiss them with a very few words. So long as serfage with all its extremely elastic relations existed, many proprietors lived constantly in an atmosphere of debt, but contrived to keep their heads above water, like merchants who are thoroughly insolvent and prolong their commercial existence by means of accommodation bills and similar desperate expedients. For these men the Emancipation, like a crisis in the commercial world, brought a day of reckoning. It did not really ruin them, but it showed them that they were ruined. Very similar is the present position of those men who were accidentally solvent at the time of the Emancipation, but have since lived recklessly beyond their incomes. These, too, have some reason to complain of the change which has been effected; for in the elastic relations which serfage created they might have lived respected and died regretted without having made the acquaintance of the Bankruptcy Court.

This leads us naturally to the moral influence of the Emancipation, but into this wide and difficult subject I cannot here enter. I do not wish to trouble the reader with *à priori* reasonings and commonplace general reflections, and I am obliged to confess that my own observations have not supplied me with sufficient materials for accurately determining this influence. It is still, I believe, too soon to treat the subject from the moral point of view.

One beneficial moral effect is, however, sufficiently apparent : the Emancipation compelled the proprietors to "put their house in order," under pain of summary ejection. By breaking down numerous barriers which protected them against the natural consequences of improvidence and folly, it has forced them to pay more attention to those simple elementary principles which form the basis of all well-regulated civilized society.

CHAPTER XXXII.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE EMANCIPATION.

B.—FOR THE PEASANTRY.

A Simple Question—Difficulty of Answering It—Shattered Illusions—Pessimistic Views—Opinions of the Peasants themselves—Causes of Stagnation—Three Explanations and Three Panaceas—The Moral Remedy—Proposed Reform of the Communal Institutions—The Peasant Courts of Justice—Supposed Obstructive Influence of the Mir—Taxes and Land-dues—Disruption of Peasant Families—A Word as to the Future.

AT the commencement of last chapter I pointed out in general terms the difficulty of describing clearly the immediate consequences of the Emancipation. In beginning now to speak of the influence which the great reform has had on the peasantry, I feel that the difficulty has reached its climax. The foreigner who desires merely to gain a general notion on the subject cannot be expected to take an interest in details, and even if he took the trouble to examine them attentively, he would derive from the labor little real information. The rural life, and in general the economic organization, of Russia is so peculiar—so very different from those of Western Europe—that even the fullest data regarding the quantity of land enjoyed by the peasantry, the amount of dues paid for it, the productivity of the soil, the price of grain, and similar topics, would convey to an Englishman's mind no clear conception of the peasants' actual condition. And, indeed, ordinary readers have no desire to study statistical data or details of any kind. What they wish is a clear, concise, and dogmatic statement of general results. [Has the material and moral condition of the peasantry improved since the Emancipation?] That is the simple question which they have to put, and they naturally expect a simple, categorical answer.

It may be naturally supposed that any one who has lived for several years in Russia, and has devoted a great part of his time to the study of the agrarian relations before and after the Eman-

cipation—who has had abundant opportunities of consulting official statistics and of questioning proprietors and peasants in various parts of the country—must necessarily be ready to answer this question in an authoritative tone. And yet, whilst recognizing that the supposition is natural and to some extent justifiable, I am obliged to make the humiliating confession that, though I have fulfilled all the conditions enumerated, I am not prepared to pronounce any very decided opinion on the subject. Nay, more, I venture to assert that any one who studies the subject carefully, in an unbiassed spirit, and draws his conclusions, not from *à priori* reasoning, but from experience, will probably find himself in the same position. That the legal position of the peasantry has been enormously improved, and their opportunities for making material and moral progress immensely increased, there can be no possible doubt. But when the investigator endeavors to go a step further, and seeks to determine how far this new legal position has been taken advantage of, and how far these new opportunities have been used to good purpose, he at once feels that he no longer stands on firm ground. Here and there he finds a village or a small district in which the inhabitants have unquestionably made considerable progress; but on the other hand he finds hundreds of villages and districts in which good and evil consequences are so mixed up together that it is impossible to draw any conclusion.

To decide the question in a scientific way it would be necessary to have complete and accurate statistical data regarding the economic condition of the peasantry before and after the Emancipation. Unfortunately the statistical material which actually exists is in general inaccurate and fragmentary, and that section of it which relates to the time of serfage* is for our present purpose almost worthless. We are thus reduced to the necessity of accepting vague opinions founded on general impressions, or, in other words, the testimony of those who have had good opportunities of observation. This category of authorities is very numerous, for it includes all proprietors of a certain age who have habitually lived on their estates; but the testimony given by these witnesses has in my opinion less value than is commonly attributed to it. To explain this I must make here a little digression.

* *e. g.*, the tables printed by the Elaboration Commission.

The great majority of educated Russians are at present suffering from the effect of shattered illusions. During the time of the Emancipation they indulged in most immoderate expectations. They believed, with an ardor of which only neophytes are capable, that Russia had discovered a new path of progress, by which she would escape the action of those harsh economic laws which weigh so heavily on the working classes of Western Europe, and that she had thereby for ever guaranteed herself against the numerous social evils under which Western Europe is laboring. In securing for the peasants the land they actually enjoyed, and in developing the Communal institutions in the direction of self-government, she laid, it was thought, a firm basis for her future prosperity. Grave doubts might be entertained as to the future fate of the landed proprietors, but there could be none, it was imagined, as to the future of the peasants. They would at once "change from head to foot." Their new position would "loosen their tongue, and break the enchanted circle of their conceptions." * As soon as they felt themselves to be free, they would strive to better their condition. Agriculture would be improved, waste lands would be reclaimed, the number of cattle would be increased, the old vices that had been created and fostered by serfage would disappear, and the new rural institutions would develop a healthy local public life. [In a word, it was expected that the Emancipation would produce instantaneously a complete transformation in the life and character of the rural population, and that the peasant would become at once a sober, industrious, model agriculturist.]

[These expectations were not realized. One year passed, five years passed, ten years passed, and the expected transformation did not take place. On the contrary, there appeared certain very ugly phenomena which were not at all in the programme. The peasants began to drink more and to work less,† and the public life which the Communal institutions produced was by no means of a desirable kind. The "bawlers" (*gorlopány*) acquired a prejudicial influence in the Village Assemblies, and in very many Volosts the peasant judges, elected by their fellow-villagers,

* These expressions are taken from an unpublished letter written immediately after the Emancipation, by a proprietor who imagined that he already perceived the change.

† I am not at all sure that the peasants really drank more and worked less, but such was, and still is, a very general conviction.

acquired a bad habit of selling their decisions for *vódka*. The natural consequence of all this was, that those who had indulged in exaggerated expectations sank into a state of inordinate despondency, and imagined that things were much worse than they really were.] This despondency still continues at the present day, and tinges strongly the commonly-received opinions regarding the present condition of the peasantry.

For different reasons, those who did not indulge in exaggerated expectations, and did not sympathize with the Emancipation in the form in which it was effected, are equally inclined to take a pessimistic view of the situation. In every ugly phenomenon they find a confirmation of their opinions. They foresaw it all, predicted it all, explained to all who would listen to them the folly of conferring on the serfs Communal lands and Communal self-government. But the government paid no attention to their warnings, and preferred listening to the seductive suggestions of socialistic dreamers. And the result has been precisely what they foretold. The peasants have used their liberty and their privileges to their own detriment and to the detriment of others! Such invectives are often heard at the present time, and they are, of course, very much intensified when the speaker has struggled unsuccessfully with the difficulties of farming with free labor, and has suffered from the negligence or bad faith of the peasants whom he employed.

The extreme "Liberals" are also inclined, for reasons of their own, to join in the doleful chorus. They desire that the condition of the peasantry should be further improved by legislative enactments, and accordingly they paint the evils in as dark colors as possible.

Thus, we see, the majority of the educated classes are at present unduly disposed to represent to themselves and to others the actual condition of the peasantry in a very unfavorable light. This is why I believe that the commonly-received opinions on the subject have less value than is commonly attributed to them.

Why then, it may be said, has the question not been submitted to the peasants themselves? Surely they are after all the best judges. They must certainly know whether their condition is better now than before the Emancipation. By questioning a large number of them in various parts of the country, and com-

bining the fragmentary evidence thus collected, we might easily, it would seem, arrive at a clear and well-founded conclusion.

Such was, I confess, my own opinion at the beginning of my investigations ; but when I endeavored to put this method into practice I very soon perceived that it was by no means so effectual as I had imagined. [In the first place it is extremely difficult to discover what the peasants' opinion really is. With all their kindly good-nature and apparent simplicity, the Russian peasantry have a large dose of homely prudence, which easily takes the form of suspicion, and when their suspicions are aroused they have, as I have elsewhere shown, a very meagre veneration for truth.* As they have no conception of disinterested scientific curiosity, they are extremely apt to suspect that a stranger who questions them regarding matters which do not personally concern him has some secret, sinister object in view.] [It is not difficult to perceive on such occasions that they put themselves at once upon their guard, and intentionally make their answers as vague as possible, in order that their supposed opponent may not overreach them.] Even when the traveler does not arouse, or succeeds in allaying, their suspicions, he cannot trust implicitly to their testimony, for they frequently, from a feeling of complacency, give him the answers which they suppose him to desire. This I have frequently proved by putting leading questions and obtaining from one and the same individual the most contradictory replies.

But it is not always on account of suspicion or complacency that the peasant's replies are vague and unsatisfactory. The chief cause of the vagueness lies, I believe, in the fact that he has generally no clear definite answer to give. Uneducated people rarely make generalizations which have no practical utility, and I feel sure that very few Russian peasants ever put to themselves the question : Am I better off now than I was in the time of serfage ? When such a question is put to them they feel taken aback. And in truth it is no easy matter to sum up the two sides of the account and draw an accurate balance, except in those exceptional cases in which the proprietor flagrantly abused his authority. The present money-dues and taxes are often more burdensome than the labor-dues in the time of serfage. If the serfs had a great many ill-defined obligations to fulfill—such as the carting of

* *Vide supra*, pp. 326-328.

the master's grain to market, the preparing of his firewood, the supplying him with eggs, chickens, home-made linen, and the like—they had, on the other hand, a good many ill-defined privileges. They grazed their cattle during a part of the year on the manor-land; they received firewood and occasionally logs for repairing their huts; sometimes the proprietor lent them or gave them a cow or a horse when they had been visited by the cattle-plague or the horse-stealer; and in times of famine they could look to their master for support. All this has now come to an end. [Their burdens and their privileges have been swept away together, and been replaced by clearly-defined, unbending, unelastic legal relations. They have now to pay the market-price for every stick of firewood which they burn, for every log which they require for repairing their houses, and for every rood of land on which to graze their cattle. Nothing is now to be had gratis. The demand to pay is encountered at every step. If a cow dies or a horse is stolen, the owner can no longer go to the proprietor with the hope of receiving a present, or at least a loan without interest, but must, if he has no ready money, apply to the village usurer, who probably considers twenty or thirty per cent. as a by no means exorbitant rate of interest.] Sometimes it even happens that the peasant has to pay without getting any return whatever, as, for instance, when his cattle stray into the proprietor's fields—an accident that may easily occur in a country where walls and hedges are almost unknown. Formerly, on such an occasion, he escaped with a scolding or with a light castigation, which was soon forgotten; but now he has to pay as a fine a sum which is for him considerable. Thinking of all this and of the other advantages and disadvantages of his new position, he has naturally much difficulty in coming to a general conclusion, and is perhaps quite sincere when, on being asked whether his new position is better than the old, he scratches the back of his head and replies, in a mystified, doubtful tone, "How shall I say to you? It is both better and worse!" (*"Kak vam shazát? I lútche i khúdzhe!"*)

Must we then at once dismiss the problem as insoluble, and turn to some other subject? Certainly not. The fact that the question is so difficult to answer is in itself important, and may be taken as a proof that little or no amelioration has taken place in the condition of the peasantry. If any great, decided ameliora-

tion had taken place it would certainly have been perceived and proclaimed to the world, and we should not have found, as we find at present, that the men who are most capable of judging are precisely those who refrain most carefully from expressing a decided opinion on the subject. Evidently the peasantry have not made the progress that was expected. [If they have improved their condition at all, the improvement is so insignificant as to be scarcely perceptible. It may be well, then, to consider what is the cause of this stagnation. Why has the abolition of serfage not yet had those beneficent consequences which even moderate men so confidently predicted?]

[On this subject there is a great diversity of opinion. Some explain the phenomenon by the demoralization of the peasantry, others by the defects of the Communal institutions, and a third group by the peculiar economic position in which the peasant is at present placed. And each of these groups has a special panacea to propose.] The first proposes moral education; the second recommends the abolition of Communal property, and important modifications in the existing system of peasant self-government; the third considers that the most necessary measures are a considerable diminution of the taxes and land-dues, a radical financial reform, and an extensive system of emigration.]

It seems to me that these three groups err less in what they assert than in what they deny or overlook, and that we have here a case in which the fundamental principle of the eclectic philosophy may be fitly applied. The phenomenon is in my opinion the result, not of one but of various causes, and consequently the evil cannot be cured by the application of a single remedy. The grounds upon which this opinion is based I proceed briefly to indicate.

That the peasantry greatly injure their material welfare by drunkenness and improvidence there can be no reasonable doubt. The comparatively flourishing state of certain villages of Old Ritualists and Molokáns, in which there is no drunkenness, and in which the community exercises a strong moral control over the individual members, shows plainly that a more satisfactory moral condition would of itself insure a more satisfactory material condition among the peasants generally. If the Orthodox Church could make the peasantry refrain from the inordinate use of strong drink as effectually as it makes them refrain during a great part

of the year from the use of animal food, and if it could instill into their minds a few simple moral principles as successfully as it has inspired them with a belief in the efficacy of the sacraments, it would certainly confer on them an inestimable benefit. But this is, for the present at least, not to be expected. The great majority of the parish clergy are men utterly unfit for such a task, and the few who have any aspirations in that direction rarely, if ever, acquire a perceptible moral influence over their parishioners.* How far the ecclesiastical reforms which are at present being attempted may be successful in this respect, it is impossible to say, but it must be confessed that there is at present nothing to justify optimistic predictions. Perhaps more is to be expected from the schoolmaster than from the priest, but it will be long before education can produce even a partial moral regeneration. Its first influence—strange as the assertion may seem—is often in a diametrically opposite direction. When only one or two peasants in the village can read and write they have such facilities for over-reaching their neighbors that they are very apt to employ their knowledge for dishonest purposes; and thus it occasionally happens that the man who has the most education is the greatest scoundrel in the *Mir*. This is sometimes used as an argument by the opponents of popular education, but in reality it is a reason for disseminating primary instruction as rapidly as possible. When the majority of the peasantry will be able to read and write they will present a less inviting field for swindling, and the temptations to dishonesty will be proportionately diminished.

But is there no more rapid method of improving the existing state of things? To arrive at material well-being through moral regeneration may be a very sure, but it is certainly a very round-about, way. Though attention to hygienic conditions is the best means of promoting health and diminishing mortality, it is sometimes well to use medicinal remedies, and even to call in the assistance of the surgical operator. Is not this a case in which the legislative lancet might be employed with advantage? In order to answer this question we must consider the diagnoses of those who propose legislative remedies. We pass, therefore, to the second of the three groups above enumerated.

* The common opinion that the Russian parish clergy exercise an enormous influence over the people is an entire mistake.

Those who propose as a remedy more or less profound modifications in the existing Communal institutions may be divided into two categories : the one declaring that the evil lies in the Communal administration as at present organized, the other holding that it lies in the fundamental principle of the Commune. Let us examine these two opinions successively.

At the time when the Emancipation question was being discussed, the great majority of the educated classes in Russia were seized with a fanatical belief in the wonderful efficacy of local, ultra-democratic self-government, and the Emancipation Law was elaborated under the influence of this belief. The Communes received almost complete autonomy, and the landed proprietors were carefully excluded from the administration and jurisdiction of the Volost. Thus was produced a most singular phenomenon : a vast system of peasant self-government, carefully protected from the influence of the other social classes—so carefully that even the proprietor whose estate lies in the middle of the Volost has no right to meddle in Volost affairs. Great expectations were entertained as to the result of this ingenious contrivance, but the expectations have not been realized, and a certain number of influential people now declare that this peculiar administration is the chief cause of the present unsatisfactory condition of the peasantry.

That the peasant self-government is very far from being in a satisfactory condition must be admitted by any impartial observer. The more laborious and well-to-do peasants do all in their power to escape election as office-bearers, and leave the administration in the hands of the less respectable members. In the ordinary course of affairs there is little evidence of administration of any kind, and in cases of public disaster, such as a fire or a visitation of the cattle-plague, the authorities seem to be apathetic and powerless. Not unfrequently a Volost Elder trades with the money he collects as dues or taxes ; and sometimes, when he becomes insolvent, the peasants have to pay their taxes and dues a second time. [The Volost Court is very often accessible to the influence of *vódka* and other kinds of bribery, so that in many districts it has fallen into utter discredit, and the peasants say that any one who becomes a judge “takes a sin on his soul.” The Village Assemblies, too, have become worse than they were in the days of serfage. At that time the Heads of Households—who, it must be remembered, have alone a voice in the decisions—were few in number, laborious,

and well-to-do, and they kept the lazy, unruly members under strict control ; now that the large families have been broken up, and almost every adult peasant is Head of a Household, the Communal affairs are often decided by a noisy majority ; and almost any Communal decision may be obtained by "treating the Mir"—that is to say, by supplying a certain amount of *vódka*.] Often I have heard old peasants speak of these things, and finish their recital by some such remark as this : "There is no order now ; the people have been spoiled ; it was better in the time of the masters."

These evils are very real, and I have no desire to extenuate them, but I believe they are by no means so great as is commonly supposed. Public opinion is greatly influenced by the philippics of proprietors who are smarting under some personal annoyance which cannot now be removed by the former summary procedure. I have frequently heard proprietors affirm that it is no longer possible to live in the country, that it will soon be necessary to build fortified castles, and much more of the same kind ; but I have never—though I have lived a good deal in the country—seen anything which could afford the slightest foundation for such exaggerated statements. Many demand from the peasant administration a great deal that no administration could possibly effect, and consequently not a few of the most common complaints have no real foundation. To effect what these proprietors desire, it would be necessary to confer on the Volost Elders or on some other office-bearer the patriarchal authority formerly wielded by the proprietor, which would be tantamount to re-introducing the worst element of the old order of things.

The complaints, it is true, do not come from the proprietors alone ; old peasants may be heard to say that there is less order now than formerly. Such statements must not, however, be taken too literally. All old men are apt to regret the good old times—especially if recent changes have deprived them in part of their authority—and to this rule the Russian peasantry are no exception. In their struggle with the difficulties of the present they are apt to forget or involuntarily to tone down the hardships and evils of the past. That the occasional complaints of old men against the present Village Assemblies are exaggerated, I am convinced not only by general considerations, but by a very significant fact. If the lazy, worthless members of the Commune had really

the direction of Communal affairs we should find that in the Northern Agricultural Zone, where it is necessary to manure the soil, the periodical re-distributions of the Communal land would be very frequent ; for in a new distribution the lazy peasant has a good chance of getting a well-manured lot in exchange for the lot which he has exhausted. Now, so far as my observations extend, I have found—much, I confess, to my astonishment—nothing of the kind. [In all, or nearly all, of the Communes which I have visited throughout this part of the country I have found that no general re-distribution has taken place since the Emancipation. It would be very interesting to know how far my observations on this point represent truly the actual state of things, but, unfortunately, no statistical data bearing on the subject have as yet been collected.]

Even if it be admitted that the peasant self-government is as defective as is commonly supposed, it does not follow that the suggestions of those who propose to abolish it should be adopted. It might be well to introduce after mature consideration some partial modifications ; but no good, I am convinced, would result from violent changes. It is still too soon to condemn these new institutions, and certainly too soon to pass sentence of death upon them. [The peasantry were suddenly raised from serfage to self-government, and they have had as yet only fifteen years to become accustomed to their new position.* Efficient self-government cannot possibly come into existence in such a short space of time. I say “come into existence” advisedly, for self-government cannot be, properly speaking, created by legislation. All that legislation can do is to remove obstacles and create forms : the spirit which is to animate these forms must come from the people, and can be generated only by long experience. The experience of the last fifteen years has been for the Russian peasants by no means fruitless. Many of them are fully conscious of the existing evils, and are sincerely desirous that they should be rooted out. That is already a great step towards amelioration, for the means of remedying the

* It may be objected that the peasantry always enjoyed a certain amount of Communal self-government. This is quite true ; but during the long period of serfage and administrative supervision, the *Mir* lost much of its independence. On private estates it was almost always under the control of the proprietor or his steward, and on the State Demesnes it was under the control of the officials.

evils are within easy reach.] When the peasants find, for instance, that the Volost Elder has not been regularly paying into the Treasury the money collected as taxes and dues, and that they have in consequence to pay their taxes and dues a second time, they will be pretty sure to insist in future on *seeing* the Treasury receipts, which the Elder says he has received. [The Russian peasant is not disposed to do much for the sake of general abstract morality, but when he finds that an administrative abuse directly affects his own pocket, he loses a great deal of his accustomed apathy. It seems to me, therefore, that it would be much better to leave the peasants to themselves, and allow them to learn from experience those lessons that can be learned in no other way.]

The oft-repeated assertion that the present organization opposes a formidable barrier to the civilizing influence of the educated classes, can have little weight with any one who knows intimately the details of Russian country life. Any proprietor who is able and willing to exert a civilizing influence on his uneducated neighbors has no need of administrative authority to assist him in his task, and those who cannot acquire this influence by their own efforts would in all probability abuse any authority intrusted to them. The proprietors possessed unlimited authority over their serfs for many generations, and it cannot be said that their civilizing influence was very great. The truth is, the assertion is repeated by those who think it would be a fine thing to have such an influence, but do not wish to take the trouble of acquiring it in a natural legitimate way. We have here another example of the unfortunate tendency—so common in Russia—to trust to legislative enactments and administrative forms, rather than to personal exertion and self-help.

Any violent change in the existing institutions would, I believe, not only be useless, but might be followed by very mischievous consequences. As an illustration of this I may point to the Volost Courts, which are in many localities the worst part of the rural administration.

In the time of serfage some Communes elected judges (*pravosudi*) from among their members, but in the great majority of estates quarrels were decided by the proprietor or his steward, and petty criminal offenses were punished by the same authority. Since the Emancipation Volost Courts with peasant judges have been created on the model of those which previously existed on the State De-

mesnes. The unsatisfactory condition of these courts and the means of improving them constitute one of the many "questions" which are at present warmly discussed. To many reformers the question seems very simple. Hearing on all sides that these courts are incompetent and corrupt, and that the Justices of the Peace, on the contrary, give general satisfaction, they propose without further consideration that the Volost Court should be abolished, and its jurisdiction handed over to the Justices. This method of solving the difficulty may be very simple, but it is very imperfect. The Volost Courts are guided merely by traditional custom and plain common sense, whilst the Justice of the Peace has to judge according to the civil law, which is unknown to the peasantry and inapplicable to their affairs. Few, if any, Justices have a sufficiently intimate knowledge of the minute details of peasant life to be able to decide fairly the cases that are brought before the Volost Courts; and even if a Justice had sufficient knowledge he could not adopt the moral and juridical notions of the peasantry. These are often very different from those of the upper classes. In cases of matrimonial separation, for instance, the educated man naturally assumes that, if there is any question of alimony, it should be paid by the husband to the wife. The peasant, on the contrary, assumes as naturally that it should be paid by the wife to the husband—or rather to the Head of the Household—as a compensation for the loss of labor which her desertion involves. Many similar peculiarities in the juridical conceptions of the peasantry might be quoted.

But why should we not apply to the peasantry, say the reformers of the Peter the Great school, those higher principles of justice which are to be found in the written law and in the consciousness of the educated classes? Therein precisely, in my opinion, lies the danger. If the *Lex Scripta* were applied suddenly to that sphere of relations in which all has hitherto been regulated by custom, it would produce a revolution in the peasant's moral conceptions, and complete the work of undermining and overthrowing his ideas of right and wrong—a work that is already sufficiently advanced. There can be no doubt that the moral laxity and limpness which may be remarked in the lower classes in Russia are to some extent the result of those violent reforms which have been so frequent during the last two centuries of Russian history. The list is already long enough without adding to it the summary abo-

lition of the Volost Courts and the application of the written law to all peasant affairs.*

Let us glance now at the opinions of those who hold that the material progress of the peasantry is prevented chiefly, not by the mere abuses of the Communal administration, but by the essential principles of the Communal institutions. Serfage, say those who adopt this view, has been abolished only in name. [Formerly the peasant was the serf of the proprietor; now he is the serf of the Commune. He is still attached to the land, and cannot leave his home even for a short period without receiving from the Commune a formal permission, for which he has often to pay a most exorbitant sum. When he has found profitable employment in the towns, or in some other part of the country, the Commune may at any moment, and on the most futile pretext, order him to return home; and if he does not obey, he is brought back like a convict. He receives a share of the Communal land, but he has no inducement to improve it, for he knows that the Commune may at any time make a re-distribution of the land, and that in this way the labor he has expended on his share will be lost to him.]

I cannot enter here on the *quæstio vexata* regarding the advantages and disadvantages of Communal property, but I shall endeavor to clear away a little of the confusion in which the subject is enveloped. Those who write and talk on the matter almost always overlook the important fact that the Commune has not everywhere the same nature and functions. In the Black-Earth Zone, where the annual dues are less than the normal rent of the land, to belong to a Commune is a privilege; in the Northern Agricultural Zone, on the contrary, where the dues exceed the normal rent, to belong to a Commune is a burden. Now it must be admitted that in the northern regions the Commune has really taken the place of the serf-proprietors, and holds its members in a state of semi-serfage; but it must in fairness be added that for this the Commune is not to blame. As it is held responsible for all dues and taxes, and these exceed the value of the benefits which it has to confer, it is obliged to retain its members by force, whether they desire to possess land or not. In short, the Commune in this part

* It may, perhaps, be objected to this that the Volost Courts have only been lately introduced. This is true, but the custom law, of which their decisions are the expression, is very old. It is, in fact, the concentrated experience of many generations.

of the country has been transformed into a tax-gatherer, and it is obliged to use stringent measures, for the taxes are heavy, and it is responsible for their payment. [What is called the Communal tyranny, therefore, must be laid, not to the account of the Commune, which is in this respect a mere instrument in the hands of the financial administration, but to the account of the Emancipation Law, which compelled the serfs of this region to purchase their liberty under the disguise of paying for the land which was conferred on them without their consent.] In the Black-Earth Zone, where the dues do not exceed the normal rent, and where, in consequence, the Commune has more the character of a voluntary association, we have few or no complaints of Communal tyranny. Here any member who wishes to absent himself can easily transfer his share of the land and of the burdens to some one of his neighbors who require more land than they actually possess. He may even, if he wishes, leave the Commune altogether, and inscribe himself as burgher in one of the towns; for the other members willingly consent to pay his dues in return for the share of land which he abandons. [Thus, we see, many of the accusations which are commonly made against the Commune ought to be made against the system of dues established by the Government. However burdensome or odious a tax may be, the tax-collector cannot reasonably be blamed for simply doing his duty, especially if he has been made a tax-collector against his will.]

There still remains, however, the difficult question as to how far the Communal right of property in the land and the periodical re-distribution to which it gives rise impose restrictions on the peasant's liberty of action in the cultivation of his share, and deprive him of all inducements to improve the soil. From the theoretical point of view this question is one of great interest, and will doubtless acquire in the future an immense practical significance, but for the present it has not, in my opinion, the importance which is usually attributed to it. There can be no doubt that it is much more difficult to farm well on a large number of narrow strips of land, many of which are at a considerable distance from the farmyard, than on a compact piece of land which the farmer may divide and employ as he pleases; and there can be as little doubt that the husbandman is more likely to improve his land if his tenure is secure, or if he is sure to obtain, in case of ejection, a fitting remuneration for capital and labor expended.

All this, and much more of the same kind, must be accepted as indisputable truths, but they have little direct bearing on the practical question under consideration. We are not considering in the abstract whether it would be better that the peasant should be a farmer with abundant capital and all the modern scientific appliances, but simply the practical question, What are the obstructions which at present prevent the peasant from ameliorating his actual condition? Let us beware, then, of wandering from the subject in hand.

[The Commune is supposed to have an obstructive influence in two ways: (1) by preventing good cultivation according to the agricultural methods actually in use; (2) by preventing the peasantry from undertaking permanent improvements and passing to a higher mode of agriculture. It will be well to submit these two propositions to the test of experience.]

That the Commune prevents the peasantry from adopting various systems of high farming is a supposition which scarcely requires serious consideration. The peasants do not yet think of any change of the kind; and if they did think of it, they have neither the knowledge nor the capital necessary to effect it. In many villages a few of the richer and more intelligent peasants have bought land and cultivate it as they please, free from all Communal restraints; and I have always found that they cultivate this property precisely in the same way as their share of the Communal land. If no striving toward a higher system of cultivation has yet appeared among these men, who may be assumed to be, as a rule, more intelligent, laborious, and energetic than their fellows, we may safely conclude that the others have not yet begun to think of the matter. As to minor changes, such as the introduction of a new kind of culture, we know by experience that the Mir opposes to them no serious obstacles. The cultivation of beet for the production of sugar has within the last few years greatly increased in the central and south-western provinces, and flax is now largely produced in Communes in northern districts where it was formerly cultivated merely for domestic use. The Communal system is, in fact, extremely elastic, and may be modified almost to any extent as soon as the majority of the members consider modifications profitable. When the peasants begin to think of permanent improvements, such as drainage, irrigation, and the like, they will find the Communal institutions a help rather than an

obstruction ; for such improvements, if undertaken at all, must be undertaken on a large scale, and the Mir is an already existing association. The only permanent improvements which can be for the present profitably undertaken consist in the reclaiming of waste land ; and such improvements are already sometimes attempted. I know at least of one case in which a Commune* has reclaimed a considerable tract of waste land by means of hired laborers. Nor does the Mir prevent in this respect individual initiative. In many Communes of the northern provinces it is a received principle of custom law that if any member reclaims waste land he is allowed to retain possession of it for a number of years proportionate to the amount of labor expended.

But does not the Commune, as it exists, prevent good cultivation according to the mode of agriculture actually in use ?

The ordinary mode of agriculture in Russia—except in the far north and in the steppe region, where the agriculture is of a peculiar kind, adapted to the local conditions—is the ordinary Three-field system in its simplest form. According to this system, good cultivation means, practically speaking, the plentiful use of manure. Does, then, the existence of the Mir prevent the peasants from manuring their fields well ?

Many people, who speak on this subject in a very authoritative tone, seem to imagine that the peasants in general do not manure their fields at all. This idea is an utter mistake. In those regions, it is true, where the rich black soil still retains a large part of its virgin fertility, the manure is used as fuel, or simply thrown away, because the peasants believe that it would not be profitable to put it on their fields, and their conviction is, at least to some extent, well founded ; but in the Northern Agricultural Zone, where unmanured soil gives almost no harvest, the peasants put upon their fields all the manure they possess. If they do not put enough it is simply because they have few cattle, and consequently not enough to put. In the intermediate region, where the soil is rapidly losing its natural fertility, they continue to throw away manure, when it might more profitably be put upon their fields ; but this phenomenon is evidently to be explained by ignorance and the force of routine, and has nothing to do with the existence of the Commune. Many landed proprietors in these localities act

* Kóprina, in the province of Yaroslaff.

in the same foolish way. As soon as the peasants become convinced that the use of manure will more than repay them for the additional labor, they invariably begin to employ it, and if they find it profitable they continue the practice.

But the peasantry of the northern provinces, it is urged, would increase the number of their cattle and put more manure on their lands if they were not afraid of Communal injustice.

In reply to this objection we must begin by defining clearly what Communal injustice in this case means. [There are two eventualities which the peasant is supposed to fear. In the first place, part of his cattle may be sold by auction by the Imperial police for Communal arrears, though he may have paid in full his own share of the taxes and dues; and in the second place, the Commune may make a general re-distribution of the land, and give to others the plots or strips which he has carefully manured for several years.]

The former of these eventualities does sometimes occur, and must have a certain deterrent influence on those peasants who desire to increase their live stock; but here again the fault lies, not in the Commune, but in the existing financial system. These confiscations of private property for Communal obligations take place likewise in Little Russia, where the Commune, in the Russian sense of the term, does not exist.

The second eventuality is the favorite weapon of those who desire to see the Commune abolished; but it has, I believe, much less influence on the peasants than is commonly supposed. To give this weapon its full force, [I shall assume with those who use it—a somewhat violent assumption, truly!—that the majority of the peasants are insensible to all claims of justice, that there is no such thing as Communal good faith, and that the majority of the members are always ready to rob the minority when they think it advantageous for themselves.] In a word, I shall leave out of view all moral considerations, and restrict myself to a simple examination of facts. And what do facts tell us? In the southern provinces, where no manure is required, the periodical re-distributions take place almost every year; as we travel northward we find the term lengthens; and in the Northern Agricultural Zone, where manure is indispensable, general re-distributions are almost unknown. In the province of Yaroslaff, for example, the Communal land is generally divided into two parts: the manured land lying near the village, and the unmanured land lying beyond. The latter

alone is subject to frequent re-distribution. On the former the existing tenures are rarely disturbed, and when it becomes necessary to give a share to a new household, the operation is effected with the least possible prejudice to vested rights.

Those who hold that the *Mir* really opposes serious obstacles to the economic progress of the rural population may be divided into two categories, according to the remedies which they propose. The one class consider that the principle of Communal property should be at once abolished, and that the Communal land should be broken up into a number of lots corresponding to the actual number of households. The other class propose that the Commune should be for the present preserved, but that its action should be regulated by certain legislative enactments.

Both of these projects seem to me a mistake. The summary abolition of Communal property would produce an economic revolution, in comparison with which the Emancipation of the serfs would sink into insignificance, and this revolution I consider, for the reasons above stated, to be at present unnecessary. I do not share the views of those who believe that the Commune will forever prevent the formation of a proletariat, much less the wild dreams of those who see in it a panacea for nearly all social evils. On the contrary, I believe that the periodical re-distribution of the land, which constitutes at present its most essential characteristic, will probably disappear. But it would be a grave error to effect suddenly and violently what will be effected gradually by the natural course of events. In this matter the peasants are the only competent judges, for they alone have a practical acquaintance with the working of the institution, and among them there are almost no Abolitionists. Every Commune has already the right to divide its land into lots and to transfer irrevocably a lot to each family; but very few Communes, except those which received "the orphan's portion," have as yet shown any disposition to use this privilege.

The proposal to regulate the action of the Commune by legislative enactments is, I think, scarcely less objectionable. No doubt the time will come when the traditional conceptions which at present regulate that action will no longer suffice, and it will be necessary to supplement the custom law by positive legislation. But this time has not yet arrived. The institution has still vitality enough to be in no need of extraneous guidance. It un-

derstands its own interests a great deal better than those who desire to legislate for it ; and it is quite capable of making, in its constitution and mode of action, any modification which its interests may demand. That it should be an eyesore to genuine bureaucrats is intelligible enough, for it is the only institution in Russia which has hitherto escaped the blighting influence of administrative pupillage—the only institution which has genuine, spontaneous, independent life in it, and does not require to draw galvanic vitality from the central authority ; but it is strange to see men, who imagine that they are partisans of self-government, doing all in their power to destroy the sole piece of real self-government which exists in the country. [All the other organs of self-government in Russia are more or less artificial and ornamental, and the power which created them might at once demolish them without producing any serious perturbation ; the Commune alone has deep roots in the traditions, the habits, and the everyday interests of the people. Again, I say the peasants are the most competent judges in this matter, and they have urgent reason to pray Heaven to protect them against their friends and self-constituted advocates.]

We come now to the last group of critics and would-be reformers : those who consider that the peasants are prevented from improving their material well-being by the difficulties of the economic position in which the Government has placed them, and who hold that the best remedy is a radical reform of the present financial system, together with organized emigration to the more fertile and less densely-peopled provinces. This is, I may say parenthetically, by far the most popular explanation of the phenomenon, and it is very natural that it should be so, for it represents the problem as extremely simple, and the remedy as easily procured. Besides this, it has a peculiarity which specially recommends it to the Russian mind ; it enables those who adopt it to put the blame on the Government, and to look to the Government for the removal of the evil.

To treat adequately the question as to how far the present financial system in general and the mode of collecting the taxes in particular affect injuriously the welfare of the peasantry, it would be necessary to write a large volume. For the present I have no intention of attempting this task. All I can do in the limited space that can be here devoted to the subject is to give a

few explanations which may perhaps dispel a little of the mist in which the question is commonly enveloped.

The direct taxes, in the wider sense of the term, which the peasants have to pay are of two kinds—taxes properly so called, and yearly dues paid for the land. These two kinds are often confounded—sometimes I suspect intentionally—but they ought to be kept carefully separate.

The taxes properly so called may be divided into three categories—Imperial, Local, and Communal. Of these, the first is fixed by the State, the second by the Zemstvo or local elective administration, and the third by the Commune. All three combined amount to about nine roubles and a half per male, so that if we take two and a half as the average number of males in each family, we find that the average amount of direct taxation which falls upon each family is about twenty-three roubles and three-quarters, or roughly speaking about £3 of our money—a very heavy burden for the great majority of peasant families.

The land-dues cannot properly be called taxes, for the peasant receives in return for them the usufruct of a certain quantity of land; but it must be admitted that they have something of the nature of taxes, for they were not fixed by voluntary contract, but were imposed upon the peasantry, together with the land, without their consent. In some parts of the country, as I have already explained, this “imposition” is a privilege; in others it is a burden. In the former—that is to say, in those localities where the normal rent exceeds the dues—the peasant may liberate himself from the dues by giving up the land; in the latter—that is to say, where the dues exceed the normal rent—he cannot liberate himself in this way, for neither the Commune nor any of the individual members would voluntarily accept his land on such conditions. We may therefore fairly regard as taxation the part of the dues which remains after we have subtracted the normal rent of the land. If, for example, we find that a peasant pays for his share of the Communal land eighteen roubles, whilst ten roubles would be a fair rent for it, we may fairly regard the remaining eight roubles as pure taxation.

Now, as a rule, it may be said that in the Southern Agricultural Zone this excess does not exist. The land is really worth more

than the dues paid for it, and they, therefore, cannot be regarded as taxes at all. If the peasant wishes to free himself from them he has no difficulty in handing over his land to the Commune, or to some one of the individual members. In the Northern Agricultural Zone, on the contrary, there are few localities in which the peasant can thus liberate himself from the dues, for they are almost always in excess of the normal rent, and we must therefore regard a considerable part of them as taxation. If, now, this part of the dues be added to the taxes properly so called, it forms a large sum—a sum too heavy to be borne by peasants who live by agriculture alone. So long as it has to be paid yearly these peasants have no possibility of improving their condition. Nay, more, their condition is evidently becoming worse, for the official statistics show that the number of cattle in these regions is decreasing, and we know that decrease of cattle means less manure and less abundant harvests.

There is thus a certain amount of truth in the assertion that inordinate taxation is one of the chief obstacles with which the peasant has to contend—especially in the Northern Agricultural Zone—but is there not some more general cause at work affecting all regions alike? some peculiarity in the actual economic position of the peasants, which places a formidable obstacle in the way of progress? I believe there is, and I shall now endeavor to explain it.

[In the time of serfage the peasant families, as I have already remarked, were generally very large. They remained undivided, partly from the influence of patriarchal conceptions, but chiefly because the proprietors, perceiving the economic advantage of large families, prevented them from breaking up into independent units. As soon as the proprietor's authority was removed the process of disintegration began and spread rapidly. Every one wished to be independent, and in a very short time nearly every able-bodied married peasant had a house of his own. The influence of this on the Communal self-government I have already pointed out; its influence on the economic position of the peasantry was still more injurious.] The building and keeping up of two or three houses instead of one necessarily entailed a large amount of extra expenditure. It must be remembered, too, that many a disaster which may be successfully resisted by a large family inevitably ruins a small one. But this is not the worst.

To understand fully the injurious influence of this breaking up of families, we must consider the fact in conjunction with the Emancipation Law.

[The Emancipation Law did not confer on the peasants as much land as they require, and consequently the peasant who has merely his legal portion has neither enough of work nor enough of revenue. If the family were large this difficulty would be easily overcome.] One member, with the help of his wife and sisters-in-law, and with the additional assistance of a hired laborer during the harvest-time, might cultivate the whole of the family land, whilst the other members sought occupation elsewhere, and sent or brought home money to pay the taxes and meet the necessary pecuniary outlay. When each able-bodied man is head of an independent household this form of domestic economy is of course impossible. Each head of a household is obliged either to remain at home or to intrust the cultivation of his share of the land to his wife. In the former case he has a great deal of idle time on his hands, unless he can rent land at a moderate price in the immediate vicinity ; and in the latter case the harvests are pretty sure to be meager, for a woman can rarely cultivate as well as a man, even when she has no domestic duties to attend to. In many localities the necessity of obtaining arable land in the immediate vicinity of the villages compels the peasants to pay what may fairly be termed "rack-rents."

How these evils are to be radically cured I do not profess to know, but I believe that much might be effected by a careful revision of the financial system in general and of the land-dues in particular. In addition to this it would be well to organize an extensive system of emigration, by which a portion of the peasantry would be transferred from the barren soil of the north and west to the rich fertile land of the eastern provinces.

Such are my conclusions regarding the present economic position of the emancipated serfs. They are the result of long and patient inquiry, but I must warn the reader against regarding them as anything more than the personal opinions of an unbiassed investigator.

One word as to the future. I think that there is far less ground for despondency than is commonly supposed. Russia is at present undergoing a great economic revolution, and is suffering from those evils which necessarily attend a period

of transition. From the bold and, on the whole, successful way in which she solved the difficult problem of serf emancipation, we may confidently assume that she will in due time successfully overcome the agrarian difficulties that still lie before her.*

* Part of this chapter, translated from the MS. by E. N. Bezak, appeared in the *Vétnik Evropy*, August, 1876.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE NEW LAW COURTS.

Judicial Procedure in the Olden Time—Defects and Abuses—Radical Reform—The New System—Justices of the Peace and Monthly Sessions—The Regular Tribunals—Court of Revision—Modification of the Original Plan—How does the System work?—Rapid Acclimatization—The Bench—The Bar—The Jury—Acquittal of Criminals who confess their Crimes—Peasants, Merchants, and Nobles as Jurymen—Independence and Political Significance of the New Courts.

AFTER the serf question, the subject which demanded most urgently the attention of reformers was the judicial organization, which had sunk to a depth of inefficiency and corruption difficult to describe.

In early times the dispensation of justice in Russia, as in other states of a primitive type, had a thoroughly popular character. The State was still in its infancy, and the duty of defending the person, the property, and the rights of individuals lay, of necessity, chiefly on the individuals themselves. Self-help formed the basis of the judicial procedure, and the State merely assisted the individual to protect his rights and to avenge himself on those who voluntarily infringed them.

By the rapid development of the autocratic power all this was changed. Autocracy endeavored to drive and regulate the social machine by its own unaided force, and regarded with suspicion and jealousy all spontaneous action in the people. The dispensation of justice was accordingly appropriated by the central authority, absorbed into the Administration, and withdrawn from public control. Themis retired from the market-place, shut herself up in a dark room from which the contending parties and the public gaze were rigorously excluded, surrounded herself with secretaries and scribes who put the rights and claims of the litigants into whatever form they thought proper, weighed according to her own

judgment the arguments presented to her by her own servants, and came forth from her seclusion merely to present a ready-made decision or to punish the accused whom she considered guilty.

This change, though perhaps to some extent necessary, was attended with very bad consequences. Freed from the control of the contending parties and of the public, the courts acted as uncontrolled human nature generally does. Injustice, extortion, bribery, and corruption assumed gigantic proportions, and against these evils the Government found no better remedy than a system of complicated formalities and ingenious checks. The judicial functionaries were hedged in by a multitude of regulations, so numerous and complicated that it seemed impossible for even the most unjust judge to swerve from the path of uprightness. Explicit, minute rules were laid down for investigating facts and weighing evidence; every scrap of evidence and every legal ground on which the decision was based were committed to writing; every act in the complicated process of coming to a decision was made the subject of a formal document, and duly entered in various registers; every document and register had to be signed and countersigned by various officials who were supposed to control each other; every decision might be carried to a higher court and made to pass a second time through the bureaucratic machine. In a word, the legislature introduced a system of formal written procedure of the most complicated kind, in the belief that mistakes and dishonesty would be thereby rendered impossible.

It may be reasonably doubted whether this system of judicial administration can anywhere give satisfactory results. It is always found by experience that in tribunals from which the healthy atmosphere of publicity is excluded justice languishes, and a great many ugly plants shoot up with wonderful vitality. Languid indifference, an indiscriminating spirit of routine, and unblushing dishonesty invariably creep in through the little chinks and crevices of the barrier raised against them, and no method of hermetically sealing these chinks and crevices has yet been invented. The attempt to close them up by increasing the formalities and multiplying the courts of appeal and revision merely adds to the tediousness of the procedure, and withdraws the whole process still more completely from public control. At the same time the absence of free discussion between the contending parties renders the task of the judge enormously difficult. If the system is to

succeed at all, it must provide a body of able, intelligent, thoroughly-trained jurists, and must place them beyond the reach of bribery and other forms of corruption.

In Russia neither of these conditions was fulfilled. Instead of endeavoring to create a body of well-trained jurists the Government went further and further in the direction of letting the judges be chosen for a short period by popular election from among men who had never received a juridical education, or a fair education of any kind ; whilst the place of judge was so poorly paid, and stood so low in public estimation, that the temptations to dishonesty were difficult to resist.

The practice of choosing the judges by popular election was an attempt to restore to the courts something of their old popular character ; but it did not succeed for very obvious reasons. Popular election in a judicial organization is useful only when the courts are public and the procedure simple ; on the contrary, it is positively prejudicial when the procedure is in writing and extremely complicated. And so it proved in Russia. The elected judges, unprepared for their work, and liable to be changed at short intervals, rarely acquired a knowledge of law or procedure. They were for the most part poor, indolent landed proprietors, who did little more than sign the decisions prepared for them by the permanent officials. Even when a judge happened to have some legal knowledge he found small scope for its application, for he rarely, if ever, examined personally the materials out of which a decision was to be elaborated. The whole of the preliminary work, which was in reality the most important, was performed by minor officials under the direction of the secretary of the court. In criminal cases, for instance, the secretary examined the written evidence—all evidence was taken down in writing—extracted what he considered the essential points, arranged them as he thought proper, quoted the laws which were in his opinion applicable to the case, put all this into a report, and read the report to the judges. Of course the judges, if they had no personal interest in the decision, accepted the secretary's view of the case. If they did not, all the preliminary work had to be done anew by themselves—a task that few judges were able, and still fewer willing, to perform. Thus the decision lay virtually in the hands of the secretary and the minor officials who were intrusted with the getting up of the case. And in general neither the secretary nor the

minor officials were fit persons to have such power. There is no need to detail here the ingenious expedients by which they increased their meager salaries, and how they generally contrived to extract money from both parties. Suffice it to say that in general the chancelleries of the courts were dens of pettifogging rascality.*

These defects and abuses were so flagrant that they became known even to the Emperor Nicholas, and made him conceive the design of thoroughly reforming the judicial organization. For this purpose the existing laws were collated, reduced to system, and published in the form of a Code. At the same time projects were formed for the simplification of the procedure. The work, however, proceeded slowly, and was in a languid, moribund condition, when it was suddenly animated by the reform enthusiasm, which broke out at the commencement of the present reign. Whilst the Emancipation question was being discussed in the Provincial Committees, the Council of State examined the question of judicial reform "from the historical, the theoretical, and the practical point of view," and came to the conclusion that the existing organization must be completely transformed.

The commission appointed to consider this important matter filed a lengthy indictment against the existing system, and pointed out no less than twenty-five radical defects. To remove these it proposed that the judicial organization should be completely separated from all other branches of the Administration; that the most ample publicity, with trial by jury in criminal cases, should be introduced into the tribunals; that Justice of Peace Courts should be created for petty affairs; and that the procedure in the ordinary courts should be greatly simplified.

These fundamental principles were published by Imperial command on September 29th, 1862—a year and a half after the publication of the Emancipation Manifesto—and on November 20th, 1864, the new legislation founded on these principles received the Imperial confirmation.

Like most institutions erected on a *tabula rasa*, the new system is at once simple and symmetrical. As a whole, the architecture

* Old book-catalogues sometimes mention a play bearing the significant title: "The Unheard-of Wonder; or, the Honest Secretary" (*Neslykhannos Dyéro ili Tchestny Tekretár*). I have never seen this curious production, but I have no doubt that it referred to the peculiarities of the old judicial procedure.

of the edifice is decidedly French, but here and there we may detect unmistakable symptoms of English influence. It is not, however, a servile copy of any older edifice ; and it may be fairly said that, though every individual part has been fashioned according to a foreign model, the whole has a certain originality.

The lower part of the building is composed of two great sections, distinct from, and independent of, each other—on the one hand the Justice of Peace Courts, and on the other the Regular Tribunals. Both sections contain an Ordinary Court and a Court of Appeal. The upper part of the building, covering equally both sections, is the Senate as Supreme Court of Revision (*Cour de Cassation*).

The distinctive character of the two independent sections may be detected at a glance. The function of the Justice of Peace Courts is to decide petty cases that involve no abstruse legal principles, and to settle, if possible by conciliation, those petty conflicts and disputes which arise naturally in the relations of everyday life ; the function of the Regular Tribunals is to take cognizance of those graver affairs in which the fortune or honor of individuals or families is more or less implicated, or in which the public tranquility is seriously endangered. The two kinds of courts have been organized in accordance with these intended functions. In the former the procedure is simple and conciliatory, the jurisdiction is confined to cases of little importance, and the judges are chosen by popular election, generally from among the local inhabitants. In the latter there is more of “the pomp and majesty of the law.” The procedure is more strict and formal, the jurisdiction is unlimited with regard to the importance of the cases, and the judges are trained jurists nominated by the Emperor.

The jurisdiction of the Justice of Peace Courts comprehends all obligations and civil injuries in which the sum at stake is not more than 500 roubles—about £66—and all criminal affairs in which the legal punishment does not exceed 300 roubles—about £40—or one year of imprisonment. When any one has a complaint to make, he may go to the Justice of the Peace (*Mirovói Sudyá*) and explain the affair orally, or in writing, without observing any formalities ; and if the complaint seems well founded, the Justice at once fixes a day for hearing the case, and gives the other party notice to appear at the appointed time. When the time appointed arrives, the affair is discussed publicly and orally, either by the

parties themselves, or by any representatives whom they may appoint. If it is a civil suit, the Justice begins by proposing to the parties to terminate it at once by a compromise, and indicates what he considers a fair arrangement. Many affairs are terminated in this simple way. If, however, either of the parties refuses to consent to a compromise, the matter is fully discussed, and the Justice gives a formal written decision, containing the grounds on which it is based. In criminal cases the amount of punishment is always determined by reference to a special Criminal Code.

If the sum at issue exceeds thirty roubles—about £1—or if the punishment exceeds a fine of fifteen roubles—about £2—or three days of arrest, an appeal may be made to the Assembly of Justices (*Mirovói Syezd*). This is a point in which English rather than French institutions were taken as a model. According to the French system, all appeals from a Juge de Paix are made to the “Tribunal d’Arrondissement,” and the Justices of Peace Courts are thereby subordinated to the Regular Tribunals. According to the English system, certain cases may be carried on appeal from the Justice of the Peace to the Quarter Sessions. This latter principle was adopted and greatly developed by the Russian legislation. The Monthly Sessions, composed of all the Justices of the District (*Uyézd*), consider appeals against the decisions of the individual Justices. The procedure is simple and informal, as in the lower court, but an assistant of the Procureur must always be present. This functionary gives his opinion in some civil and in all criminal cases immediately after the debate, and the Court takes his opinion into consideration in forming its decision.

In the other great section of the judicial organization—the Regular Tribunals—there are likewise Ordinary Courts and Courts of Appeal, called respectively “Tribunaux d’Arrondissement” (*Okružniye Sudý*) and “Palais de Justice” (*Sudébníya Paláty*). Each Ordinary Court has jurisdiction over several Districts (*Uyézdý*), and the jurisdiction of each Court of Appeal comprehends several Provinces. The relation, however, between the higher and the lower court in the two cases is not identical. In the Regular Tribunals *all* civil cases are subject to appeal, however small the sum at stake may be, and criminal cases are decided *finally* by the lower court with the aid of a jury. Thus in criminal affairs the “Palais de Justice” is not at all a court of appeal, but as no regular criminal prosecution can be raised without its

formal consent, it controls in some measure the action of the lower courts.

As the general reader cannot be supposed to take an interest in the details of civil procedure, I shall merely say on this subject that in both of these courts the cases are always tried by at least three judges, the sittings are public, and oral debates by officially-recognized advocates form an important part of the proceedings. I venture, however, to speak a little more at length regarding the change which has been made in the criminal procedure—a subject that is less technical and more interesting for the uninitiated.

Down to the time of the recent judicial reforms the procedure in criminal cases was secret and inquisitorial. The accused had little opportunity of defending himself, but on the other hand the State took endless formal precautions against condemning the innocent. The practical consequence of this system was that an innocent man might remain for years in prison until the authorities convinced themselves of his innocence, whilst a clever criminal might indefinitely postpone his condemnation.

In studying the history of criminal procedure in foreign countries, those who were intrusted with the task of preparing projects of reform found that nearly every country of Europe had experienced the evils from which Russia was suffering, and that one country after another had come to the conviction that the most efficient means of removing these evils was to replace the inquisitorial by litigious procedure, to give a fair field and no favor to the prosecutor and the accused, and allow them to fight out their battle with whatever legal weapons they might think fit. Further it was discovered that, according to the most competent foreign authorities, it was well in this modern form of judicial combat to leave the decision to a jury of respectable citizens. The steps which Russia had to take were thus clearly marked out by the experience of other nations, and it was decided that they should be taken at once. The organs for the prosecution of supposed criminals were carefully separated from the judges on the one hand, and from the police on the other; oral discussions between the Public Prosecutor and the prisoner's counsel, together with oral examination and cross-questioning of witnesses, were introduced into the procedure; and the jury was made an essential factor in criminal trials.

When a case, whether civil or criminal, has been decided in the Justice of Peace Courts or in the Regular Tribunals, there is no

possibility of appeal in the strict sense of the term, but an application may be made for a revision of the case on the ground of technical informality. To use the French terms, there cannot be *appel*, but there may be *cassation*. If the law has evidently been misinterpreted or misapplied, if there has been any omission or transgression of essential legal formalities, or if the Court has overstepped the bounds of its legal authority, the injured party may make an application to have the case revised and tried again.* This is not, according to French juridical conceptions, an appeal. The Court of Revision † (*Cour de Cassation*) does not enter into the material facts of the case, but merely decides the question as to whether the essential formalities have been duly observed, and as to whether the law has been properly interpreted and applied; and if it be found on examination that there is some ground for invalidating the decision, it does not decide the case, but merely hands it over to be tried anew. According to the new Russian system, the Senate is the sole Court of Revision, alike for the Justice of Peace Courts and for the Regular Tribunals.

The Senate thus forms the regulator of the whole judicial system, but its action is merely regulative. It takes cognizance only of what is presented to it, and supplies to the machine no motive power. If any of the lower courts should work slowly or cease to work altogether, the Senate might remain ignorant of the fact, and certainly could take no official notice of it. It was considered necessary, therefore, to supplement the spontaneous vitality of the lower courts, and for this purpose was created a special centralized judicial administration, at the head of which was placed the Minister of Justice. The Minister is "Procureur-Général," and has a subordinate in each of the courts. The primary function of this administration is to preserve the force of the law, to detect and repair all infractions of judicial order, to defend the interests of the State and of those persons who are officially recognized as incapable of taking charge of their own affairs, and to act in criminal matters as Public Prosecutor. Besides this, it has acquired, partly by legislation and partly by the force of circumstances, a

* This is the procedure referred to by Karl Karl'itch. *Vide supra*, p. 42.

† I am quite aware that the term "Court of Revision" is equivocal, but I have no better term to propose, and I hope that the above explanations will prevent confusion.

secondary function, of which I shall have something to say when I come to speak of the autonomy and independence of the courts.

Viewed as a whole, and from a little distance, this grand judicial edifice seems perfectly symmetrical, but a closer and more minute inspection shows that the apparent harmony of detail is obtained by means of blind windows, false doors, and other artistic falsehoods. Nay, more, there are unmistakable signs of a change of plan during the process of construction. Though the work lasted only about half-a-dozen years, the style of the upper differs from the style of the lower parts, precisely as in those Gothic cathedrals which grew up slowly during the course of centuries. And there is nothing here that need surprise us, for a considerable change had taken place in the opinions of the official world during that short period. The reform was conceived at a time of uncritical enthusiasm for advanced liberal ideas, of boundless faith in the dictates of science, of unquestioning reliance on public spirit, public control, and public honesty—a time in which it was believed that the public would spontaneously do everything necessary for the common good, if it were only freed from the administrative swaddling-clothes in which it had been hitherto bound. Still smarting from the severe régime of Nicholas, men thought more about protecting the rights of the individual than about preserving public order, and under the influence of the socialistic ideas in vogue, malefactors were regarded as the unfortunate, involuntary victims of social inequality and injustice. Toward the end of the period all this had begun to change. Many were beginning to perceive that liberty might easily turn to license, that the spontaneous public energy was chiefly expended in empty words, and that a certain amount of hierarchical discipline was necessary in order to keep the public administration in motion. It was found, therefore, in 1864, that it was impossible to carry out to their ultimate consequences the general principles laid down and published in 1862. Even in those parts of the legislation which were actually put in force, it was found necessary to make modifications in an indirect covert way. Of these, one may be cited by way of illustration. In 1860 criminal inquiries were taken out of the hands of the police, and transferred to “Juges d’Instruction” (*Sudébnije Slédovateli*), who were almost entirely independent of the Public Prosecutor, and could not be removed unless condemned for some legal transgres-

sion by a Regular Tribunal. This reform created at first much rejoicing and great expectations, because it raised a barrier against the tyranny of the police and against the arbitrary power of the higher officials. But very soon the defects of the system became apparent. Many "Juges d'Instruction," feeling themselves independent, and knowing that they would not be prosecuted except for some flagrantly illegal act, gave way to indolence, and spent their time in inactivity.* In such cases it was always difficult, and sometimes impossible, to procure a condemnation—for indolence must assume gigantic proportions in order to become a crime—and the minister had to adopt the practice of appointing, without Imperial confirmation, temporary "Juges d'Instruction" whom he could remove at pleasure.

It is unnecessary, however, to enter into these theoretical defects. The important question for the general public is: How do the institutions work in the local conditions in which they are placed?

This is a question which has an interest not only for Russians, but for all students of social science, for it tends to throw light on the difficult subject as to how far institutions may be successfully transplanted to a foreign soil. Many thinkers hold, and not without reason, that no institution can work well unless it is the natural product of previous historical development. Now we have here an opportunity of testing this theory by experience; we have even what Bacon terms an *experimentum crucis*. This new judicial system is an artificial creation constructed in accordance with principles elaborated by foreign jurists. All that the elaborators of the project said about the historical point of view was mere talk. In reality they made a *tabula rasa* of the existing organization. If the introduction of public oral procedure and trial by jury was a return to ancient institutions, it was a return to what had been long since forgotten by all except antiquarian specialists, and no serious attempt was made to develop what actually existed. One form, indeed, of oral procedure had been preserved in the Code, but it had fallen completely into disuse, and seems to have been overlooked by the elaborators of the new system.†

* A flagrant case of this kind came under my own observation.

† I refer to the so-called *Sąd po formê*, established by a ukáz of Peter the Great, in 1723. I was much astonished when I accidentally stumbled upon it in the Code.

Having in general little confidence in institutions which spring ready-made from the brains of autocratic legislators, I expected to find that this new judicial organization, which looks so well on paper, was well-nigh worthless in reality. Observation, however, has not confirmed my pessimistic expectations. On the contrary, I have found that these new institutions, though they have not yet had time to strike deep root, and are very far from being perfect even in the human sense of the term, work on the whole remarkably well, and have already conferred immense benefit on the country.

Though scarcely ten years have passed since the reforms began to be introduced—they have not yet been introduced into many parts of the empire—the Justice of Peace Courts, which may perhaps be called the newest part of the new institutions, have already become thoroughly acclimatized as if they had existed for generations. At first neither the people nor the Justices themselves had a very clear conception of the true function of these courts. Many peasants regarded the Justice as they had been wont to regard kindly proprietors of the old patriarchal type, and brought their griefs and sorrows to him in the hope that he would somehow alleviate them. Often they submitted most intimate domestic and matrimonial concerns, of which no court could possibly take cognizance, and sometimes they demanded the fulfillment of contracts which were in flagrant contradiction not only with the written law, but also with ordinary morality.* Some of the Justices were guilty of aberrations of a different kind. Imagining that their mission was to eradicate the conceptions and habits which had been created and fostered by serfage, they sometimes used their authority for giving lessons in philanthropic liberalism, and took a malicious delight in wounding the susceptibilities, and occasionally even the material interests, of those whom they regarded as enemies to the good cause. In disputes between master and servant, or between employer and workmen, the Justice of this type considered it his duty to resist the tyranny of capital, and was apt to forget his official character of judge in his assumed character of social reformer. Happily these miscon-

* Many curious instances of this have come to my knowledge, but they are of such a kind that they cannot be quoted in a work intended for the general public.

ceptions on the part of the people, and these aberrations on the part of the Justices, are rapidly disappearing, and will probably be ere long a thing of the past.

The Regular Tribunals have likewise become acclimatized in an incredibly short space of time. The judges are not generally by any means profound jurists, and are too often deficient in that dispassionate calmness which we are accustomed to associate with the Bench ; but they are at least honest, educated men, and generally possess a fair knowledge of the law. Their chief defects are to be explained by the fact that the demand for trained jurists has far exceeded the supply, and the Government has been forced to nominate many men who, under ordinary circumstances, would never have thought of presenting themselves as candidates. At the beginning of 1870, in the 32 "Tribunaux d'Arrondissement" which then existed, there were 227 judges, of whom 44 had never received a juridical education.* Even the presidents have not all passed through a school of law. Of course the courts cannot become thoroughly effective until all the judges are men who have received a good special education, and have a practical acquaintance with judicial matters. This will doubtless be effected in time, and already it may be confidently predicted that the second generation of judges will be better prepared and more capable than their predecessors.

Descending from the Bench to the Bar, we find less reason for satisfaction. The new system cannot be successfully worked without a large body of able, respectable, trustworthy advocates, and such a body has not yet been formed. In criminal affairs any one may act as counsel. In civil practice there are two kinds of advocates : regular Barristers (*Prisúzhniye porérenniye*) and licensed practitioners. The former are always men who have passed through a school of law ; the latter require no educational qualification, except the passing of an examination, which is a mere empty formality. In both of these classes are to be found a certain number of men well qualified for the duties they have to perform, but very many even of the regular barristers have still to learn the elementary principles of judicial debating. Above all, they have to learn the simple rule of sticking to their brief. It is no unfrequent occurrence—especially in cases which attract public atten-

* These figures are taken from the *Vétnik Evrópy*, June, 1871, p. 780.

tion—that the counsel cannot resist the temptation of showing off newly-acquired learning, and making references to French, German, or English legislation, which do not in the least elucidate the matter in hand. This tendency appears most frequently among the very young men, and the fact may to some extent be explained by the present system of juridical education. Instead of expounding carefully the law of the land, the professors too often indulge in vague disquisitions and criticisms, with frequent reference to foreign legislations, so that many students at the end of their law course have acquired merely a chaotic muddle of general principles, foreign systems, juridical philosophy, and political economy, and a most imperfect acquaintance with actual Russian law and procedure.

Regarded from the moral point of view the Bar does not present more matter for congratulation. I do not at all share the views of those who consider barristers very wicked men because they seek to conceal the weak points of their case and employ the recognized devices of forensic strategy; but I think that every barrister should be animated with a feeling of professional honor and professional dignity, and that the professional moral standard should be raised as high as possible. Now it seems to me that the professional moral standard of the Bar in Russia is still in an embryonic state, and that the individual members are, almost without exception, animated by a rapaciously commercial, mercenary spirit. The advocate generally makes with the client a formal contract, according to which he receives a large sum in the event of winning the case, and a moderate remuneration if he is unsuccessful. In criminal affairs it is often expressly stipulated that the remuneration shall be in the inverse ratio of the severity of the sentence. The prisoner promises, for instance, after perhaps a good deal of hard bargaining—to pay 10,000 roubles if he is acquitted, 5,000 if he is condemned to a year's imprisonment, and 1,000 if he is transported for fifteen years to Siberia; and the advocate takes good care that a considerable part of the sum should be paid to him in advance. And this is not the worst—barristers not only sell their services as dear as possible, but sometimes use dishonest means for raising the price. One of the most common methods is to frighten the client by describing in vivid colors, or positively exaggerating, the dangers to which he is exposed. Another method is to demand, while the case is going on, a large

sum for secret purposes—that is to say, for “greasing the palm” of influential officials. Both of these devices are unfortunately only too often successful. The old belief that litigation and criminal procedure are a kind of difficult game, in which victory must always be on the side of the most dexterous player, irrespective of justice and equity, and that bribery and back-door influence are indispensable for success, is still deeply rooted in the popular mind. Thus, among the people, especially the uneducated mercantile classes, there is a blind, childish faith in the omnipotence of the most celebrated advocates, and some of these, dexterously using this faith for their own ends, have succeeded in amassing large fortunes in an incredibly short space of time. The arrangements between counsel and client are, of course, generally kept secret,* but even when ugly disclosures are inadvertently made, they attract little attention and excite little indignation. So lenient is public opinion in this respect, that professional reputation is not seriously affected by affairs which in England would lead to disbarring and disgrace. Symptoms of a change for the better have indeed already appeared. In St. Petersburg and Moscow the barristers have formed themselves into a corporation, administered by a council, which has the right to reprimand, rusticate, and expel. It cannot reasonably be expected, however, that such means can have a very deep or lasting influence unless they are supported by public opinion.

Of all the recent judicial innovations, perhaps the most interesting is the jury.

At the time of the reforms the introduction of the jury into the judicial organization awakened among the educated classes a great amount of sentimental enthusiasm. The institution had the reputation of being “liberal,” and was known to be approved of by the latest authorities in criminal jurisprudence. This was sufficient to insure it a favorable reception, and to excite most exaggerated expectations as to its beneficent influence. Ten years of experience have more than sufficed to cool this enthusiasm, and now voices may be heard declaring that the introduction of the jury was a mistake. It is now held by many that the Russian people is not yet ripe for such an institution, and numerous anec-

* This is all the more easily done, as there is in Russia no intermediate class corresponding to the attorneys and solicitors in England.

notes are related in support of this opinion. One jury, for instance, is said to have returned a verdict of “*not guilty with extenuating circumstances*,” and another, being unable to come to a decision, is reported to have cast lots before an Icon, and to have given a verdict in accordance with the result! Besides this, juries often give a verdict of “*not guilty*” when the accused makes a full and formal confession to the court.

How far the comic anecdotes are true I do not undertake to decide, but I venture to assert that such incidents, if they really occur, are too few to form the basis of a serious indictment. The fact, however, that juries often acquit prisoners who openly confess their crime is beyond all possibility of doubt, and is therefore deserving of serious consideration.

To most Englishmen this fact will probably seem sufficient to prove that Russian society is not yet ripe for the institution, but before adopting this sweeping conclusion it will be well to examine the phenomenon a little more closely in connection with Russian criminal procedure as a whole.

In England the Bench is allowed very great latitude in fixing the amount of punishment. The jury can therefore confine themselves to the question of fact and leave to the judge the appreciation of extenuating circumstances. In Russia the position of the jury is different. The Russian criminal law fixes minutely the punishment for each category of crimes, and leaves almost no latitude to the judge. The jury know that if they give a verdict of guilty, the prisoner will inevitably be punished according to the Code. Now the Code, borrowed in great part from foreign legislation, is founded on conceptions very different from those of the Russian people, and in many cases attaches severe punishment to acts which, in the opinion of the Russian people, are merely peccadilloes, or are positively justifiable. Even in those matters in which the Code is in harmony with the popular morality, there are many exceptional cases in which *summum jus* is really *summa injuria*. Suppose, for instance—as actually happened in a case which came under my notice—that a fire breaks out in a village, and that the Village Elder, driven out of patience by the apathy and laziness of some of his young fellow-villagers, oversteps the limits of his authority as defined by law, and accompanies his reproaches and exhortations with a few lusty blows. Surely such a man is not guilty of a very heinous crime—certainly he is not in the

opinion of the peasantry—and yet if he be prosecuted and convicted he inevitably falls into the jaws of an Article which condemns to transportation for a long term of years. In such cases what are the jury to do? In England they might safely give a verdict of guilty, and leave the judge to take into consideration all the extenuating circumstances; but in Russia they cannot act in this way, for they know that the judge must condemn the prisoner according to the Criminal Code. There remains therefore but one issue out of the difficulty—a verdict of acquittal; and Russian juries—to their honor be it said—generally adopt this alternative. Thus the jury, in those very cases in which it is most severely condemned, provides a corrective for the injustice of the criminal legislation. Occasionally, it is true, they go a little too far in this direction and arrogate to themselves a right of pardon, but cases of this kind are, I believe, very rare. I know of only one well-authenticated instance. The prisoner had been proved guilty of a serious crime, but it happened to be the eve of a great religious festival, and the jury thought that in pardoning the prisoner and giving a verdict of acquittal, they would be acting as good Christians!

The legislation regards, of course, this practice as an abuse, and has tried to prevent it by concealing as far as possible from the jury the punishment that awaits the accused if he be condemned. For this purpose it forbids the counsel for the prisoner to inform the jury what punishment is prescribed by the Code for the crime in question. This ingenious device not only fails in its object, but has sometimes a directly opposite effect. Not knowing what the punishment will be, and fearing that it may be out of all proportion to the crime, the jury sometimes acquit a criminal whom they would condemn if they knew what punishment would be inflicted. And when a jury is, as it were, entrapped, and finds that the punishment is more severe than it supposed, it can take its revenge in the succeeding cases. I know at least of one instance of this kind. A jury convicted a prisoner of an offense which it regarded as very trivial, but which in reality entailed, according to the Code, seven years of penal servitude. So surprised and frightened were the jurymen by this unexpected consequence of their verdict, that they obstinately acquitted, in the face of the most convincing evidence, all the other prisoners brought before them.

The defects, real and supposed, of the present system are commonly attributed to the predominance of the peasant element in the juries; and this opinion, founded on *à priori* reasoning, seems to many too evident to require verification. The peasantry are in many respects the most ignorant class, and therefore, it is assumed, they are least capable of weighing conflicting evidence. Plain and conclusive as this reasoning seems, it is in my opinion erroneous. The peasants have, indeed, little education, but they have a large fund of plain common sense; and experience proves—so at least I have been informed by many judges and public prosecutors—that, as a general rule, a peasant jury is more to be relied on than a jury drawn from the educated classes. It must be admitted, however, that a peasant jury has certain peculiarities, and it is not a little interesting to observe what those peculiarities are.

In the first place, a jury composed of peasants generally acts in a somewhat patriarchal fashion, and does not always confine its attention to the evidence and the arguments produced at the trial. The members form their judgment as men do in the affairs of ordinary life, and are sure to be greatly influenced by any jurors who happen to be personally acquainted with the prisoner. If several of the jurors know him to be a bad character, he has little chance of being acquitted, even though the chain of evidence against him should not be quite perfect. Peasants cannot understand why a notorious scoundrel should be allowed to escape because a little link in the evidence is wanting, or because some little judicial formality has not been duly observed. Indeed, their ideas of criminal procedure in general are extremely primitive. The Communal method of dealing with malefactors is best in accordance with their conceptions of well-regulated society. The Mir may, by a Communal decree and without a formal trial, have any of its unruly members transported to Siberia!* This summary, informal mode of procedure seems to

* In describing the Mir I inadvertently omitted to mention this important right which it possesses. The peasants so transported are not sent to the mines, but are settled as colonists on unoccupied land in some distant region beyond the Ural Mountains. If this right of deportation is not very often used, it is partly because the Mir has to defray the necessary expenses, and partly because the members are afraid that the unarrested malefactor may, on discovering their intention, set fire to the village or avenge himself in some

the peasants very satisfactory. They are at a loss to understand how a notorious culprit is allowed to "buy" an advocate to defend him, and are very insensible to the bought advocate's eloquence. To many of them, if I may trust to conversations which I have casually overheard in and around the courts, "buying an advocate" seems to be very much the same kind of operation as bribing a judge.

In the second place, the peasants, when acting as jurors, are very severe with regard to crimes against property. In this they are instigated by the simple instinct of self-defense. They are, in fact, continually at the mercy of thieves and malefactors. They live in wooden houses easily set on fire; their stables might be broken into by a child; at night the village is guarded merely by an old man, who cannot be in more than one place at a time, and in the one place he is apt to go to sleep; a police-officer is rarely seen, except when a crime has actually been committed. A few clever horse-stealers may ruin many families, and a fire-raiser, in his desire to avenge himself on an enemy, may reduce a whole village to destitution. These and similar considerations tend to make the peasants very severe against theft, robbery, and arson; and a Public Prosecutor who desires to obtain a conviction against a man charged with one of these crimes endeavors to have a jury in which the peasant class is largely represented.

With regard to fraud in its various forms, the peasants are much more lenient, probably because the line of demarcation between honest and dishonest dealing in commercial affairs is not very clearly drawn in their minds. Many, for instance, are convinced that trade cannot be successfully carried on without a little clever cheating; and hence cheating is regarded as a venial offense. If the money fraudulently acquired be restored to the owner, the crime is supposed to be completely condoned. Thus when a Volost Elder appropriates the public money, and succeeds in repaying it before the case comes on for trial, he is invariably acquitted—and sometimes even re-elected!

An equal leniency is generally shown by peasants towards crimes against the person, such as assaults, cruelty, and the like.

similar way. Setting fire to the village is popularly termed "letting go the red cock" (*pustít' krásnago petukhá*)—a phrase which corresponds to the old French expression, "les charpentiers rouges," well known before the Revolution.

This fact is easily explained. Refined sensitiveness and a keen sympathy with physical suffering are the result of a certain amount of material well-being, together with a certain degree of intellectual and moral culture, and neither of these is yet possessed by the Russian peasantry. Any one who has had opportunities of frequently observing the peasants must have been often astonished by their indifference to suffering, both in their own persons and in the persons of others. In a drunken brawl heads may be broken and wounds inflicted without any interference on the part of the spectators. If no fatal consequences ensue, the peasant does not think it necessary that official notice should be taken of the incident, and certainly does not consider that any of the combatants should be transported to Siberia. Slight wounds heal of their own accord without any serious loss to the sufferer, and therefore the man who inflicts them is not to be put on the same level as the criminal who reduces a family to beggary. This reasoning may, perhaps, shock people of sensitive nerves, but it undeniably contains a certain amount of plain, homely wisdom.

Of all kinds of cruelty, that which is perhaps most revolting to civilized mankind is the cruelty of the husband towards his wife; but to this crime the Russian peasant shows especial leniency. He is still influenced by the old conceptions of the husband's rights, and by that low estimate of the weaker sex which finds expression in many popular proverbs.*

The peculiar moral conceptions reflected in these facts are evidently the result of external conditions, and not of any recondite ethnographical peculiarities, for they are not found among the merchants, who are nearly all of peasant origin. On the contrary, the merchants are more severe with regard to crimes against the person than with regard to crimes against property. The explanation of this is simple. The merchant has means of protecting his property, and if he should happen to suffer by theft, his fortune is not likely to be seriously affected by it. On the other hand, he has a certain sensitiveness with regard to such crimes as assault; for though he has commonly not much more intellectual and moral culture than the peasant, he is accustomed to comfort

* These proverbs are very numerous. The following may serve as an illustration:—"In ten women there is but one soul;" "In woman there is no soul, but only a vapor (par);" "Women have long hair but short intelligence." In other popular sayings women are compared to serpents.

and material well-being, which naturally develop sensitiveness regarding physical pain.

Towards fraud the merchants are quite as lenient as the peasantry. This may, perhaps, seem strange, for fraudulent practices are sure in the long run to undermine trade. The Russian merchants, however, have not yet arrived at this conception, and can point to many of the richest members of their class as a proof that fraudulent practices often create enormous fortunes. Long ago Samuel Butler justly remarked that "We damn the sins we have no mind to."

As the external conditions have little or no influence on the religious conceptions of the merchants and the peasantry, the two classes are equally severe with regard to those acts which are regarded as crimes against the Deity. Hence acquittals in cases of sacrilege, blasphemy, and the like never occur unless the jury is in part composed of educated men.

In their decisions, as in their ordinary modes of thought, the jurors drawn from the educated classes are little, if at all, affected by theological conceptions, but they are sometimes influenced in a not less unfortunate way by conceptions of a different order. It may happen, for instance, that a juror who has passed through one of the higher educational establishments has his own peculiar theory about the value of evidence, or he is profoundly impressed with the idea that it is better that a thousand guilty men should escape than that one innocent man should be punished, or he is imbued with sentimental pseudo-philanthropy, or he is convinced that punishments are useless because they neither cure the delinquent nor deter others from crime; in a word, he may have in some way or other lost his mental balance in that moral chaos through which Russia is at present passing. In England, France, or Germany such an individual would have little influence on his fellow-jurymen, for in these countries there are very few people who allow new paradoxical ideas to overturn their traditional notions and obscure their common sense; but in Russia, where even the elementary moral conceptions are singularly unstable and pliable, a man of this type may succeed in leading a jury. More than once I have heard men boast of having induced their fellow-jurymen to acquit every prisoner brought before them, not because they believed the prisoners to be innocent or the evidence to be insufficient, but because all punishments are useless and barbarous.

Keeping facts of this kind in view, I cannot agree with those who hold that the English practice of demanding unanimity from the jury should be introduced into Russia.

One word in conclusion regarding the independence and political significance of the new courts. When the question of judicial reform was first publicly raised, many people hoped that the new courts would receive complete autonomy and real independence, and would thus form a foundation for political liberty. These hopes, like so many illusions of that strange time, have not been realized. A large measure of autonomy and independence was indeed granted in theory. The law laid down the principle that no judge could be removed unless convicted of a definite crime, and that the courts should present candidates for all the vacant places on the bench ; but these and similar rights have little practical significance. If the Minister cannot depose a judge, he can deprive him of all possibility of receiving promotion, *tehins*, decorations, and the like, and he can easily force him in an indirect way to send in his resignation ; and if the courts have still the right to present candidates for vacant places, the Minister has also this right, and can, of course, always secure the nomination of his own candidate. By the influence of that centripetal force which exists in all centralized bureaucracies, the *Procureurs* have become more important personages than the Presidents of the courts, and the independence of the judges is little better than a mere name.

In thus limiting the independence and autonomy of the courts of justice, the Government is commonly supposed to have committed a heinous sin against the spirit of liberalism and progress. This may be in a certain sense true, but I am not sure that the fact is to be regretted. Self-government is no doubt an excellent thing in itself, and is especially necessary in Russia, but it is not a miracle-working panacea, and it rarely bears good fruit when planted suddenly among a people who have long been unaccustomed to it. The experiments hitherto made in Russia have not been very encouraging—especially in the universities, which are in many respects analogous to the courts. Any one who knows what may be called the *histoire intime* of the universities during the last few years may reasonably doubt whether the efficiency of the local courts would necessarily be increased by conferring on them a larger measure of independence and autonomy. Their independence could not possibly have any political value so long as

the Government can use the "administrative procedure" already described.* When the educated classes have acquired a little more genuine independence in other spheres of activity, and when a healthy, powerful, all-controlling public opinion has been created, it will be time enough, as it seems to me, to free the local tribunals from the control of the central authorities.

* *Vide supra*, p. 263.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

TERRITORIAL EXPANSION AND THE EASTERN QUESTION.

Rapid Growth of Russia—Expansive Tendency of Agricultural Peoples—The Russo-Slavonians—The Northern Forest and the Steppe—Colonization—The Part of the Government in the Process of Expansion—Expansion towards the West—Growth of the Empire represented in a Tabular Form—Assimilation of Annexed Peoples—Russian View of English Policy—Subsidiary Incentives to Expansion—Protective Tariff—Analysis of the Expansive Tendency and Probable Expansion in the Future—Russian Advance towards India—Aggressive Tendencies towards Constantinople; the Religious, Ethno-sentimental, and Political Factors—The Recent Movement in Russia—The Policy of the Russian Government—Conclusion.

THE rapid growth of Russia is one of the most remarkable facts of modern history. An insignificant tribe, or collection of tribes, which, a thousand years ago, occupied a small district near the sources of the Dnieper and Western Dvina, has grown into a great nation with a territory stretching from the Baltic to the Northern Pacific, and from the Polar Ocean to the frontiers of Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, and China. We have here a fact well deserving of investigation, and as the process is still going on with unabated rapidity and is commonly supposed to threaten our national interests, the investigation ought to have for us more than a mere scientific interest. What is the secret of this expansive power? Is it a mere barbarous lust of territorial aggrandizement, or is it some more reasonable motive? And what is the nature of the process? Is annexation followed by assimilation, or do the new acquisitions retain their old character? Is the Empire in its present extent a homogeneous whole, or merely a conglomeration of heterogeneous units held together by the outward bond of centralized administration? If we could find satisfactory answers to these questions, we might determine how far Russia is strengthened or weakened by her annexations of terri-

tory, and might form some plausible conjectures as to how, when, and where the process of expansion is to stop.

By glancing at the history of Russia from the economic point of view we may easily detect one prominent cause of expansion.

An agricultural people, employing merely the primitive methods of agriculture, has always a strong tendency to widen its borders. The natural increase of population demands a constantly-increasing production of grain, whilst the primitive methods of cultivation exhaust the soil and steadily diminish its productivity. With regard to this stage of economic development, the modest assertion of Malthus, that the supply of food does not increase so rapidly as the population, often falls far short of the truth. As the population increases, the supply of food may decrease not only relatively but absolutely. When a people finds itself in this critical position it must adopt one of two alternatives: either it must prevent the increase of population, or it must increase the production of food. In the former case it may legalize the custom of "exposing" infants, as was done in ancient Greece; or it may regularly sell a large portion of the young women and children, as was done until very recently in Circassia; or the surplus population may emigrate to foreign lands, as the Scandinavians did in the ninth century, and as we ourselves are doing in a more peaceable fashion at the present day. The other alternative may be effected either by extending the area of cultivation or by improving the system of agriculture.

The Russo-Slavonians, being an agricultural people, experienced this difficulty, but for them it was not serious. A convenient way of escape was plainly indicated by their peculiar geographical position. They were not hemmed in by lofty mountains or stormy seas. To the south and east—at their very doors, as it were—lay a boundless expanse of thinly-populated virgin soil, awaiting the labor of the husbandman and ready to repay it most liberally. The peasantry, therefore, instead of exposing their infants, selling their daughters, or sweeping the seas as Vikings, simply spread out towards the east and south. This was at once the most natural and the wisest course, for of all the expedients for preserving the equilibrium between population and food-production, increasing the area of cultivation is, under the circumstances just described, the easiest and most effective. Theoretically the same result might have been obtained by improving the method of agriculture, but

practically this was impossible. Intensive culture is not likely to be adopted so long as expansion is easy. High farming is a thing to be proud of when there is a scarcity of land, but it would be absurd to attempt it where there is abundance of virgin soil in the vicinity.

The process of expansion, thus produced by purely economic causes, was accelerated by influences of another kind, especially during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The increase in the number of officials, the augmentation of the taxes, the merciless exactions of the Voyevods and their subordinates, the transformation of the peasants and "free wandering people" into serfs, the ecclesiastical reforms and consequent persecution of the schismatics, the frequent conscriptions and violent reforms of Peter the Great, these and other kinds of oppression made thousands flee from their homes and seek a refuge in the free territory, where there were no officials, no tax-gatherers, and no proprietors. But the State, with its army of tax-gatherers and officials, followed close on the heels of the fugitives, and those who wished to preserve their liberty had to advance still further. Notwithstanding the efforts of the authorities to retain the population in the localities actually occupied, the wave of colonization moved steadily onwards.

The vast territory which lay open to the colonists consisted of two contiguous regions, separated from each other by no mountains or rivers, but widely differing from each other in many respects. The one, comprising all the northern part of Eastern Europe and of Asia, even unto Kamtchatka, may be roughly described as a land of forests, intersected by many rivers, and containing numerous lakes and marshes; the other, stretching southwards to the Black Sea, and eastwards far away into Central Asia, is for the most part what Russians call "the steppe," and Americans would call the prairies.

Each of these two regions presented peculiar inducements and peculiar obstacles to colonization. So far as the facility of raising grain was concerned, the southern region was decidedly preferable. In the north the soil had little natural fertility, and was covered with dense forests, so that much time and labor had to be expended in making a clearing before the seed could be sown.* In the south, on the contrary, the squatter had no trees to fell,

* The *modus operandi* has been already described; *vide supra*, p. 114.

and no clearing to make. Nature had cleared the land for him, and supplied him with a rich black soil of marvelous fertility, which has not yet been exhausted by centuries of cultivation. Why, then, did the peasant often prefer the northern forests to the fertile steppe where the land was already prepared for him?

For this apparent inconsistency there was a good and valid reason. The muzhik had not, even in those good old times, any passionate love of labor for its own sake, nor was he by any means insensible to the facilities for agriculture afforded by the steppe. But he could not regard the subject exclusively from the agricultural point of view. He had to take into consideration the fauna as well as the flora of the two regions. At the head of the fauna in the northern forests stood the peace-loving laborious Finnish tribes, little disposed to molest settlers who did not make themselves obnoxiously aggressive; on the steppe lived the predatory, nomadic hordes, ever ready to attack, plunder, and carry off as slaves the peaceful agricultural population. These facts, as well as the agricultural conditions, were known to intending colonists, and influenced them in their choice of a new home. Though generally fearless and fatalistic in a high degree, they could not entirely overlook the dangers of the steppe, and many of them preferred to encounter the hard work of the forest region.

These differences in the character and population of the two regions determined the character of the colonization. Though the colonization of the northern regions was not effected without bloodshed, it was, on the whole, of a peaceful kind, and consequently received little attention from the contemporary chroniclers. The colonization of the steppe, on the contrary, required the help of the Cossacks, and forms, as I have already shown, one of the bloodiest pages of European history.

Thus, we see, the process of expansion towards the north, east, and south may be described as a spontaneous movement of the agricultural population. It must, however, be admitted that this is an imperfect and one-sided representation of the phenomenon. Though the initiative unquestionably came from the people, the Government played an important part in the movement.

In early times when Russia was merely a conglomeration of independent principalities, the princes were under the moral and political obligation of protecting their subjects, and this obliga-

tion coincided admirably with their natural desire to extend their dominions. When the Grand Princes of Muscovy, in the fifteenth century, united the numerous principalities and proclaimed themselves Tsars, they accepted this obligation for the whole country, and conceived much grander schemes of territorial aggrandizement. Towards the north and north-east no strenuous efforts were required. The Republic of Novgorod easily gained possession of Northern Russia as far as the Ural mountains, and Siberia was conquered by a small band of Cossacks without the authorization of Muscovy, so that the Tsars had merely to annex the already conquered territory. In the southern region the part played by the Government was very different. The agricultural population had to be constantly protected along a frontier of enormous length, lying open at all points to the incursions of nomadic tribes. To prevent raids it was necessary to keep up a military cordon, and this means did not always insure protection to those living near the frontier. The nomads often came in formidable hordes, which could be successfully resisted only by large armies, and sometimes even the whole military strength of the country was insufficient to cope with them. Again and again during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Tartar hordes swept over the country—burning the villages and towns, and spreading devastation wherever they appeared—and during more than two centuries Russia had to pay a heavy tribute to the Khans.

Gradually the Tsars threw off this galling yoke. Ivan the Terrible annexed the three Khanates of the Lower Volga—Kazán, Kiptchákh, and Astrakhan—and in that way removed the danger of a foreign domination. But permanent protection was not thereby secured to the outlying provinces. The nomadic tribes living near the frontier continued their raids, and in the slave markets of the Crimea the living merchandise was supplied by Russia and Poland.

To protect an open frontier against the incursions of nomadic tribes, three methods are possible: the construction of a great wall, the establishment of a strong military cordon, and the permanent subjugation of the marauders. The first of these expedients, adopted by the Romans in Britain and by the Chinese on their north-western frontier, is enormously expensive, and utterly impossible in a country like Russia; the second was con-

stantly tried, and constantly found wanting; the third is alone practicable and efficient. Though the Government has long since recognized that the acquisition of barren, thinly populated steppes is a burden rather than an advantage, it has been compelled to go on making annexations for the purpose of self-defense.

In consequence of this active part which the Government took in the extension of the territory, the process of political expansion sometimes got greatly ahead of the colonization. After the Turkish wars and consequent annexations in the time of Catherine II., for example, a great part of southern Russia was almost uninhabited, and the deficiency had to be corrected, as we have seen, by organized emigration. At the present day, in the Asiatic provinces, there are still immense tracts of unoccupied land, some of which would repay richly the labor of the colonist.

If we turn now from the East to the West we shall find that the expansion in this direction was of an entirely different kind. The country lying to the westward of the early Russo-Slavonian settlements had a poor soil and a comparatively dense population, and consequently held out no inducements to emigration. Besides this, it was inhabited by warlike agricultural races, who were not only capable of defending their own territory, but even strongly disposed to make encroachments on their eastern neighbors. Russian expansion to the westward was, therefore, not a spontaneous movement of the agricultural population, but the work of the Government, acting slowly and laboriously by means of diplomacy and military force; it had, however, a certain historical justification.

No sooner had Russia freed herself, in the fifteenth century, from the Tartar domination, than her political independence, and even her national existence, were threatened from the West. Her western neighbors were, like herself, animated with that tendency to national expansion which I have above described; and for a time it seemed doubtful who should ultimately possess those vast plains which are now known as the Russian Empire. The chief competitors were the Tsars of Muscovy and the Kings of Poland. For some time the latter appeared to have the better chance. In close connection with Western Europe, they had been able to adopt many of the improvements which had recently been made in the art of war, and they already possessed the rich valley of the Dnieper. Once, with the help of the free Cossacks, they suc-

ceeded in overrunning the whole of Muscovy, and the son of the Polish king was elected Tsar in Moscow. By attempting to accomplish their purpose in a too hasty and reckless fashion, they raised a storm of religious and patriotic fanaticism, which very soon drove them out of their newly-acquired possessions; but the country remained in a very precarious position, and its more intelligent rulers perceived plainly that, in order to carry on the struggle successfully, they must import something of that Western civilization, which gave such an advantage to their opponents. In the year 1553, an English navigator, whilst seeking for a short route to China and India, had accidentally discovered the port of Archangel on the White Sea, and since that time the Tsars had kept up an intermittent diplomatic and commercial intercourse with England. But this route was at all times tedious and dangerous, and during a great part of the year it was closed by the ice. In view of these difficulties the Tsars tried to import "cunning foreign artificers," by way of the Baltic; but their efforts were frustrated by the Livonian Order, who at that time held the east coast, and who considered, like certain prudent people on the west coast of Africa at the present day, that the barbarous natives of the interior should not be supplied with arms and ammunition. All the other routes to the West traversed likewise the territory of rivals, who might at any time become avowed enemies. Under these circumstances the Tsars naturally desired to break through the barrier which hemmed them in, and the acquisition of the eastern coast of the Baltic became one of the chief objects of Russia's foreign policy.

After Poland, Russia's most formidable rival was Sweden. That power early acquired a large amount of territory to the east of the Baltic—including the mouths of the Neva, where St. Petersburg now stands—and long harbored ambitious schemes of further conquest. In the troublous times, when the Poles overran the country, she invaded Muscovy from the north-west, and confidently expected a share of the spoil. The well-known efforts of the eccentric Charles XII. in the same direction need not be described.

In comparison with these two rivals Russia was weak in all that regarded the art of war; but she had two immense advantages: she had a very large population, and a strong, stable Government that could concentrate the national forces for any definite pur-

pose. All that she required for success in the competition was an army on the European model. Peter the Great created such an army, and won the prize. After this the political disintegration of Poland proceeded rapidly, and when that unhappy country fell to pieces, Russia naturally took for herself the lion's share of the spoil. Sweden, too, sunk to political insignificance, and gradually lost all her trans-Baltic possessions. The last of them—the Grand Duchy of Finland, which stretches from the Gulf of Finland to the Polar Ocean—was ceded to Russia by the peace of Friederichshamm in 1809.

The territorial extent of all these acquisitions will be best shown in a tabular form. The following table represents the process of expansion from the time when Ivan III. united the independent principalities and threw off the Tartar yoke, down to the accession of Peter the Great in 1682 :—

					Russian Sq. Miles.
In 1505 the Tsardom of Muscovy contained about	-	-			37,000
" 1533	"	"	"	"	47,000
" 1584	"	"	"	"	125,000
" 1598	"	"	"	"	157,000
" 1676	"	"	"	"	257,000
" 1682	"	"	"	"	265,000

Of these 265,000 Russian square miles about 80,000 were in Europe and about 185,000 in Asia. Peter the Great, though famous as a conqueror, did not annex nearly so much territory as many of his predecessors and successors. At his death, in 1725, the empire contained, in round numbers, 82,000 square miles in Europe and 193,000 in Asia. The following table shows the subsequent expansion :—

					In Enrope and the Caucasus.	In Asia.
					Rus. sq. m.	Rus. sq. m.
In 1725 the Russian Empire contained about					82,000	.. 193,000
" 1770	"	"	"	"	84,000	.. 210,000
" 1800	"	"	"	"	95,000	.. 210,000
" 1825	"	"	"	"	105,000	.. 210,000
" 1855	"	"	"	"	106,663	.. 245,000
" 1867	"	"	"	"	106,951	.. 248,470

In this table is not included the territory in the North-West of America—containing about 24,210 Russian square miles—which

was annexed to Russia in 1799 and ceded to the United States in 1867. Regarding the amount of territory recently acquired in Central Asia I do not possess any statistical data.*

When once Russia has laid hold of territory she does not readily relax her grasp. She has, however, since the death of Peter the Great, on four occasions ceded conquered territory. To Persia she ceded, in 1729, Mazanderan and Astrabad, and in 1735, a large portion of the Caucasus; in 1856, by the treaty of Paris, she gave up the mouths of the Danube and part of Bessarabia; and in 1867 she sold to the United States her American possession. To these ought perhaps to be added the strip of territory which she lately conquered from the Khivans, and handed over to Bokhara.

The increase in the population—due in part to territorial acquisitions—since 1722, when the first census was taken, has been as follows:—

In 1722 the Empire contained about 14 million inhabitants.					
" 1742	"	"	"	16	"
" 1762	"	"	"	19	"
" 1782	"	"	"	28	"
" 1796	"	"	"	36	"
" 1812	"	"	"	41	"
" 1815	"	"	"	45	"
" 1835	"	"	"	60	"
" 1851	"	"	"	68	"
" 1858	"	"	"	74	"

Russia's power of expansion has always been much greater than her power of assimilating the annexed population. In annexing the Baltic Provinces, Poland, and Finland, she left them a very large amount of administrative autonomy. At the present day Finland has its own officials, its own coinage, and its own custom-houses; and the Russians compose less than two per cent. of the population. Even in the provinces, which have no peculiar administrative autonomy, the population is, as I have shown in preceding chapters, very heterogeneous. Wherever the Russians and the foreign race are in different stages of economic development—as for example, where the one are agriculturists and the other lead a pastoral life—no amalgamation has taken place. Where

* The above figures are taken from Obrutchev: Voénno-Statisticheski Sbórník, St. Petersburg, 1871.

no such economic obstacles exist, an equally efficient barrier is often formed by religion. Tribes that have no higher religion than a rude polytheism easily become Orthodox and Russian; but the Mahometans, the Roman Catholics, and the Protestants, never become Russians in the full sense of the term. Thus, we find among the subjects of the Tsar a great many distinct nationalities, often living in close proximity to each other. Not to mention numerous Turanian tribes, we may say that the Russo-German, the Pole, the Finlander, the Georgian, and the Armenian, differ from each other as widely as the Frenchman, the German, the Italian, and the Englishman.

During the last few years attempts have been made to accelerate the process of assimilation by abolishing peculiar local administrations and privileges, by introducing a general system of military service, by making Russian the official language in all parts of the empire, by some feeble attempts at religious propaganda, and by various similar means. Of the ultimate success of these measures, which produce for the moment a great deal of dissatisfaction, it would be hazardous to express an opinion. The tendency, however, is in itself interesting, and the spirit which prompts it is worthy of attention. In the minds of many it proceeds simply from a patriotic feeling of hostility to foreign, and especially German, influence—what certain political philosophers term “a protest of the recently-awakened national self-consciousness” against the privileges that were formerly conferred on foreigners of all descriptions. Amongst a few it has a very different character. These think that the ideas which came into vogue at the time of the Emancipation should be at once applied to the outlying provinces: the *laissez faire* system should no longer be tolerated; the peasantry should receive land, enjoy communal self-government, and be freed from the influence of the landed proprietors; the artisans should be protected against the oppression and rapacity of the capitalists; and all vague traditional authority should be replaced by a system of administration in accordance with administrative science as taught in the Universities.

These theoretical administrators of the new school often contrast their views with the policy of England. “You English,” they say, “are incurable aristocrats, and are still imbued with antiquated feudal principles. You glory in what you call equality before the law, but your equality is of a kind that leads to ine-

quality of the worst description, and admits of the grossest oppression so long as the oppressor respects certain legal formalities. In the unrestricted competition which you create and protect, the weak must of course go to the wall, and be *exploités* by the stronger. Aristocratic feeling and the love of individual freedom—these are the fundamental principles of your political life at home, and you naturally apply them in all the countries which you bring under your power. We Russians, on the contrary, are genuine democrats, and the representatives of modern ideas. We think that legal equality in your sense of the term does not suffice, and that the law ought to struggle against social inequality. Feudalism in all its forms is our special abhorrence, and we ruthlessly abolish all feudal relations wherever we find them. Therein lies a profound difference between Russian and English policy with regard to annexed provinces. England everywhere, out of respect for feudal authority, forges anew the fetters which bind the rural population; Russia, on the contrary, strikes off these fetters and brings freedom to the oppressed peasantry. Hence if ever fate should bring Russia into a country organized on English principles she will be welcomed as a deliverer by the great majority of the lower classes." This last remark may be taken as addressed to the administrators of our Indian Empire.

The idea that "free England" should be an oppressor, and that "despotic Russia" should appear as the apostle of liberty will, doubtless, seem to many people very paradoxical and absurd; but I am not prepared to say that it does not contain a certain little element of truth. Conceptions of freedom and justice are not exempt from the universal law of change. The time is perhaps not very far distant when the traditional Whig notions of liberty and democratic reform will seem strangely inadequate, and even the present Liberal conceptions may one day come to be regarded as somewhat superficial. However this may be, certain it is that the Russian peasantry have reason to congratulate themselves that they were emancipated by a Russian autocrat, and not by a British House of Commons; and it is equally certain that in some of the annexed provinces the lower classes enjoy advantages which they would not possess under British rule. The most serious defects of Russian administration in conquered provinces lie, not in the policy adopted by the Government, but in the instruments employed for carrying it out. There are, perhaps, too many *Tchinóvniks*

in Russia, but the more intelligent and honest officials dislike being banished to outlying regions, and easily find employment nearer the center of the empire. The consequence of this is that the administration of the outlying provinces is, to a great extent, in the hands of men of little ability, or of tarnished reputation; and we can readily understand why Finland and the Baltic provinces object to an invasion of such administrators, and obstinately defend the remains of local autonomy which they still possess. In this matter Russia should take a lesson from the Germans, who sent their best officials into Alsace and Lorraine.

So much for the past. To sum up, we may say that if we have read Russian history aright the chief motives of expansion have been spontaneous colonization, self-defense—especially against nomadic tribes—and high political aims, such as the desire to reach the sea-coast, and that the process has been greatly facilitated by the peculiar geographical position of the country and the autocratic form of government. Before passing to the future I ought, perhaps, to say a few words concerning two additional causes of expansion, of which one is dying out and the other only now coming into play; I mean the foolish lust of territorial aggrandizement for its own sake, and the idea of forwarding the commercial interests of the nation.

Russians, like other nations, are not entirely exempt from the foolish lust of territorial acquisitions irrespective of any real advantages which the acquisitions may afford. The idea of possessing India, for example, with its millions of inhabitants far exceeding the actual population of the whole Russian Empire, has a seductive charm for some amateur speculative politicians, and perhaps there may be a few imaginative persons who think that it would be a still grander thing to annex the whole of Asia. But such foolish dreams and the foolish talk which they sometimes produce do not deserve serious attention. People who take no part in political life are always apt to indulge in political dreaming, but they at once awake as soon as the burden of responsibility is placed on their shoulders. No man who has any official influence indulges in wild projects of this kind. All the more serious Russians are coming to perceive that extent of territory is by no means synonymous with national greatness in the higher sense of the term, and that territorial acquisitions are often a burden rather than an advantage.

As to the idea of forwarding the commercial interests of the nation, it must be admitted that this is a more serious motive, and one which is likely to increase rather than diminish in force. Russia now aspires to become a great industrial and commercial nation, and she believes that by means of her vast natural resources, and the enterprising character of her people, she will succeed in realizing this aspiration. As Englishmen may not at once perceive what this has to do with territorial expansion, it may be well to explain the ideas of Russians on the subject.

Great Britain is at present in the position of a successful manufacturer who has outstripped his rivals, and has awakened amongst them a considerable amount of jealousy and envy. To justify those feelings a peculiar economic theory has been invented. England, it is said, has become by her "*politique d'exploitation*" the great blood-sucker of less advanced nations. Having no cause to fear competition, she advocates the insidious principles of Free Trade, and deluges foreign countries with her manufactures to such an extent that native industries are inevitably overwhelmed. In the pride of their hearts the manufacturers and merchants of Manchester and London may exclaim—using the quaint words of the old poet Waller :—

" Gold, though the heaviest metal, hither swims ;
Ours is the harvest where the Indians mow,
We plow the deep and reap where others sow."

Thus all nations pay tribute to England. But this cannot last for ever. The fallacies of Free Trade have been detected and exposed, and the nations have found in the beneficent power of protective tariffs a means of escape from British thralldom.

In no country are those ideas more frequently expressed than in Russia, and they have there led to a rather illogical but very natural result. As some ultra-liberal politicians, when in opposition, systematically attack all restrictions on the liberty of the press, and systematically adopt these restrictions for their own benefit when they come into power, so the Russians habitually assail with impassionate rhetoric our industrial and commercial supremacy, and at the same time habitually seek to emulate it. The means they employ, however, are different from ours. Knowing that free competition would inevitably lead to defeat, they raise, wherever their dominion extends, a line of commercial

fortifications in the shape of custom-houses, through which foreign manufactured goods have great difficulty in forcing their way. By this means they protect their newly-adopted subjects from the heartless "exploitation" of Manchester and Birmingham, and consign them to the tender mercies of the manufacturers of Moscow and St. Petersburg. The economic influence of Moscow, which sells dear, is somehow infinitely less baneful and burdensome for the native populations than that of Manchester, which sells cheap.*

However false these views may be it is pretty certain that Russia will not soon abolish her protective system, and, therefore, we must, in endeavoring to estimate her expansive tendencies, take into consideration her desire to further her commercial interests. As her industry is still insufficient to supply her actual wants, she will certainly not, for the present at least, annex new territory for the simple purpose of obtaining new markets; but even at present, whenever she happens to have other reasons for widening her borders, the idea of acquiring commercial advantages may act as a subsidiary incentive. Of this we saw lately an instance in the Khiva affair. If the Khan had conscientiously fulfilled his international obligations, the expedition would not have been undertaken; but when the expedition was successful, certain clauses in the convention showed that commercial interests were not forgotten.

Having thus analyzed the expansive tendency of Russia, let us now endeavor to determine how these various elements of which it is composed are likely to act in the future. In this investigation it will be well to begin with the simpler, and proceed gradually to the more complex parts of the problem.

Towards the north and the west the history of Russian expansion may be regarded as closed. In the north, advance is physically impossible till new habitable lands be discovered in the Polar regions, and westwards it is almost as unlikely. By the conquest of Finland in 1809, Russia obtained what may be called her natural frontier in the north-west, and it is scarcely conceivable

* It is only fair to state that there are many Russians who do not share this opinion, and a few who are avowed Free Traders. Among these latter I may name the economist M. Bezobrázof, and the editor of the *Moscow Gazette*, M. Katkoff, who is often but most erroneously supposed by English newspapers to be animated with a permanent, fanatical hatred against England.

that she should wish to annex any part of the barren rocks of Northern Scandinavia. In the direction of Germany annexations are neither desirable nor possible. Russia cannot reasonably desire to have a disaffected German population on her western frontier, and if she did conceive such a desire she could not realize it, for Germany is strong enough to defend her own territory.

Towards the east and south-east the problem is not so simple. The recent sale of the American possessions may be taken as a conclusive proof that Russia has wisely determined to remain on this side of Behring's Straits ; and though she may, perhaps, covet certain islands of the Japanese group, there is little chance of her obtaining them. She has, it is true, recently annexed Sagalien (Sakhalin), which is near the Amoor territory, and formerly belonged to Japan ; but this acquisition is useful merely as a penal settlement, and any further advance in this direction can easily be stopped, if it should be considered necessary. An arm of the sea, deep enough to float ironclads, paralyzes her expansive power. Encroachments on the Chinese Empire could not so easily be prevented. How and when they will be made must depend to a great extent on the Chinese Government. Russia already possesses near the Chinese frontier far more territory than she can possibly utilize for many years to come, and, therefore, she has no inducement to annex new land in this region, provided the Chinese prevent their subjects from committing depredations. It may happen, however, that China will be unable to fulfill her police-duties towards her neighbors, and in that case it is not at all unlikely that Russia may find annexation less troublesome and less expensive than the maintenance of a strong military cordon. Indeed, at this moment she occupies a small Chinese province, and cannot evacuate it till the Chinese Government sends a force sufficient to maintain order. In calculating the cost of annexation, density of population is the principal factor. Where land is required for agricultural colonization, the tendency to encroach is always, *cæteris paribus*, in the inverse ratio to the density of population in the coveted territory ; for where the native inhabitants are scarce, the soil is not exhausted, and there is more room for colonists. But where land is not required for this purpose, as on the Chinese frontier, the tendency to annex a new province is always directly proportionate to the density of its population. An uninhabited territory not required for colonization is simply a

burden, for it necessitates expenditure and gives no revenue ; whereas a territory with a tolerably dense population furnishes new tax-payers and new markets for the national industry, and thereby pays, or more than pays, the expenses of administration. Thus, if we possessed accurate topographical information and complete statistical data, we might almost reduce Russia's expansive tendencies in Central Asia to a question of simple arithmetic.

We come now to a part of the problem which touches us more nearly than the integrity of the Chinese Empire—the advance of Russia in the direction of the Hindoo Koosh and Afghanistan. My topographical knowledge of that part of the world is not sufficient to justify me in entering into the details of the question, but I may briefly indicate the general principles upon which those who are better informed ought to base their calculations.

The advance of Russia in this direction is commonly attributed to her insatiable, omnivorous appetite for new territory, and to secret designs against our Indian Empire. Many people imagine that the Tsar might any morning say to his Minister, “ Thus far shalt thou go, and no further ; ” and that all difficulties would be thereby satisfactorily solved. Some who consider themselves better informed will not admit this theory, and adopt one that is much more ingenious. The present Tsar, say these, is not an ambitious man, and has no desire to conquer India. So far they are right, but being unable to throw off entirely their traditional prejudices, they make a compromise. As a certain devil-spirit, when cast out of a human being, entered into a flock of swine and drove them down into the sea, so this fiend of territorial lust, in being cast out of the august occupant of the throne, has, it is supposed, entered as a *pis-aller* into the Russian officers in Turkestan, and ruthlessly drives them across the inhospitable steppe which separates the Russian from the British frontier. Though quite ready to pay a just tribute of respect to Alexander II., these theorists are not to be robbed of their demon, and refuse to sacrifice such an old and useful acquaintance on the altar of Natural Causes.

That some of the officers in Turkestan constantly desire war as a pleasant excitement and a means of promotion, is very probable, and that some of them are apt to overstep their instructions, as General Tchernáyef did on a memorable occasion, there can be not the slightest doubt ; but that these men should systematically

disobey their superiors, and should be able to force the government, against its wish and its interests, to annex new territory, cannot for a moment be admitted by any one who knows Russia well. Though the autocratic power is far from being practically omnipotent in the details of administration, it is quite strong enough to prevent officers from annexing new provinces, unless they have very cogent reasons for doing so. The reasons which they have are those which I have described.

Along the greater part of the Asiatic frontier the old question of protection by a military cordon *versus* annexation is certainly at issue. The difficulties and defects of the non-aggressive system were well illustrated in comparatively recent times on the great plain to the north of the Caucasus. I choose this instance because I happen to know something of the details, and have heard the testimony of both parties in the struggle. The Circassians and Kabardintsi considered that making raids on the Russian population beyond the frontier was not only legitimate but even a highly meritorious act, just as the Scottish Highlanders in the olden time were very proud of their cattle-lifting expeditions. To repel these raids the Russian Government formed a line of Cossack *stanitsas*, which stretched from the Sea of Azof to the Caspian. This mode of defense was at once costly and ineffectual. In spite of all precautions bands of marauders slipped unobserved, or broke violently, through the line, and often succeeded in carrying off a large quantity of booty. After many years of experience the Russians came to the conclusion that the only effectual way of preventing these incursions was to conquer the marauding tribes, and subject them to a strict administrative supervision. This fact is instructive. If the system of military colonies proved expensive and ineffectual in a well-watered and extremely fertile country like the basins of the Kubáan and Térek, we can easily imagine how unsatisfactory it must be in Central Asia, where the frontier is incomparably longer, and in many parts utterly unfit for agricultural colonization. Already there are rumors that it will soon be necessary to undertake the permanent pacification of the Turcomans.

If it be true, as I believe, that predatory tribes can be made to keep the peace only when they know that they may be attacked and punished on their own territory and that there is no asylum to which the marauders can flee, then it follows that the idea of a neutral zone between the Russian and British frontiers cannot for

a moment be entertained, unless, indeed, it were possible to find a broad, uninhabitable zone which would serve the same purpose as the Great Wall of China. If the intervening zone be habitable, it will inevitably become an asylum for all the robbers and lawless spirits within a radius of many hundred miles, and no civilized power can reasonably be expected to accept such neighbors. If such a zone had been established Russia might justly have said to England: "I object to have at my door this refuge for rascality. Either you must preserve order among the inmates or allow me to do so."

"Where, then," asks the alarmed Russophobist, "is the aggression of Russia to stop? Must we allow her to push her frontier forward to our own, and thereby expose ourselves to the danger of those conflicts which inevitably arise between nations that possess contiguous territory?" To this I reply that Russia must push forward her frontier until she reaches a country possessing a government which is able and willing to keep order within its boundaries, and to prevent its subjects from committing depredations on their neighbors. As none of the petty States of Central Asia seem capable of permanently fulfilling this condition, it is pretty certain that the Russian and British frontiers will one day meet. Where they will meet depends upon ourselves. If we do not wish our rival to overstep a certain line, we must ourselves advance to that line. As to the complications and disputes which inevitably arise between contiguous nations, I think they are fewer and less dangerous than those which arise between nations separated from each other by a small State which is incapable of making its neutrality respected, and is kept alive simply by the mutual jealousy of rival Powers. Germany does not periodically go to war with Holland or Russia, though separated from them by a mere artificial frontier, whilst France and Austria have never been prevented from going to war with each other by the broad intervening territory. The old theory that great Powers may be made to keep the peace by interposing small independent States between them is long since exploded; and even if it were true it would be inapplicable in the case under consideration, for there is nothing worthy of being called an independent State between Russian territory and British India.

Of course it is quite possible that, whether we have a contiguous frontier or not, Russia may some day, in the event of hostili-

ties, make a diversion in the direction of India, and thereby cause us considerable annoyance. This ought certainly to be kept in view, but it does not justify the foolish panics which occasionally occur in English public opinion regarding the safety of our Indian possessions. In any attack that might be made, our position would be in the military sense of the term so incomparably superior to that of our antagonist that, if we could not repel the invasion, we have no longer any right to hold India. "But the native populations!" say the alarmists; "they would rise up in a body against us!" If there is any foundation for this sinister prediction, it confirms what I have just said. If the native populations are so very disaffected, it follows that our vaunted civilizing influence is merely a fine name for rule by terrorism, and we ought at once to improve our system of administration. To this the Anglo-Indian Russophobe may perhaps reply that our administration is admirable, but that no amount of good administration can counteract insidious foreign influence. It is difficult to believe a statement of this kind, but if it is true regarding our Indian subjects, it is probably true likewise regarding the native populations beyond the frontier, and we may say, in the words of the schoolboy adage, "Two can play at that game." Really we are sometimes a little too modest regarding our military and political capacities, and certain organs of our Press justify the common belief among foreigners that our wealth has undermined our old moral energy, that we have become old and decrepit, and that there is no longer any "fight" left in us. In reality this is a mistake. The way in which we suppressed the last Indian mutiny may not be a very satisfactory manifestation of that peculiarly Christian and humanitarian spirit for which we sometimes imagine we are distinguished, but it affords a very good proof that we have still a large reserve fund of potential energy. Heaven forbid that we should learn to indulge in Chauvinism and bluster, or that we should through overweening confidence neglect any reasonable precautions for the protection of our national interests! But let us not forget that the loss of our calm self-reliance would be an almost equally grave misfortune, and might lead us in a moment of panic to commit mistakes and even "atrocities," of which we should afterwards be ashamed.

Proceeding westward from the Hindoo Koosh and Afghanistan we come to a district where some people consider Russian aggression

to be imminent—I mean the northern provinces of Persia. As Russia already holds undisputed sway on the Caspian, she might easily appropriate any territory near the coast, but as she has not at present, so far as I am aware, any reason for extending her dominion in that direction, we may at once pass to the region on which the eyes of Europe are at this moment fixed.

The aggressive tendencies of the Russians in the direction of Constantinople are nearly as old as Russian nationality, and much older than the Russian empire. The Russo-Slavonians who held the valley of the Dnieper from the ninth to the thirteenth century were one of those numerous border tribes which the tottering Byzantine empire attempted to ward off by diplomacy and rich gifts, and by giving to the troublesome chiefs, on condition of their accepting Christianity, princesses of the imperial family as brides. Vladimir, Prince of Kief—now recognized as a saint by the Russian Church—accepted Christianity in this way, and his subjects followed his example. Russia thus became ecclesiastically a part of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the people learned to regard Tsar-grad—that is, the City of the Tsar or Byzantine Emperor—with peculiar veneration.

All through the long Tartar domination, when nomadic hordes held the valley of the Dnieper and formed a barrier between Russia and Southern Europe, the capital of the Greek-Orthodox world was remembered and venerated by the Russian people, and in the fifteenth century it acquired in their eyes a new significance. At that time the relative positions of Constantinople and Moscow were changed. Constantinople fell under the power of the Turks, whilst Moscow threw off the yoke of the Tartars—the northern representatives of the Turkish race. The Grand Prince of Moscow and of all Russia thereby became the chief protector of the Greek-Orthodox Church, and in some sort the successor of the Byzantine Tsars. To strengthen this claim he married a member of the old imperial family, and his successors went further in the same direction, by assuming the title of Tsar and inventing a fable about their great ancestor Rurik being a descendant of Cæsar Augustus.*

* The gradual emancipation of the Russian Church from the authority of the Byzantine Patriarch, described in chap. xxvii., tended likewise in this direction.

All this would seem to a lawyer or diplomatist a very shadowy title, and none of the Russian monarchs—except, perhaps, Catherine II., who formed the project of resuscitating the Byzantine Empire, and caused one of her grandsons to learn modern Greek in view of possible contingencies—ever seriously thought of claiming the imaginary heritage; but the idea that the Tsars ought to rule in Tsargrad, and that St. Sophia, polluted by Moslem abominations, should be restored to the Orthodox, struck deep root in the minds of the Russian people. This idea is not yet quite extinct. When serious disturbances break out in the East, the Russian peasantry begin to think that perhaps the time has come when a crusade will be undertaken for the recovery of the Holy City on the Bosphorus, and for the liberation of their brethren in the faith who now groan under Turkish bondage. This is the religious element in that strange attractive force which connects Russia with Constantinople.

Very different from this religious element, yet often inseparably blended with it, is an ingredient which I may term, for want of a better word, the Ethno-sentimental element. After the fall of the first Napoleonic empire, a violent popular reaction took place all over Europe in favor of national independence and republican institutions; and shortly afterwards the discoveries of comparative philology, together with other influences, suggested to political theorists certain grand confederations of peoples founded on ethnological consanguinity. The existing European political units would, it was thought, group themselves into three categories—the Romanic, the Teutonic, and the Slavonian; and the principle of political federation, whilst satisfying the demands of ethnology, would leave to the individual nations a sufficient amount of local autonomy. This theory awoke new aspirations all over Europe. In the West it could not take a very firm hold of the public mind, because all the Western nations, with the exception of Italy, enjoyed at least national independence, and knew nothing of foreign oppressors. If they had to suffer tyranny it was not the tyranny of the foreigner, and therefore the patriotic feelings in their simplest form were not called into play. In South-eastern Europe, on the contrary, the effect was very different. Though the great masses among the Slavs knew nothing of the intellectual movements which agitated the Western nations, there were a few individuals who had thrown themselves into the general current of

European thought, and through these men the new ideas penetrated into Slavonia. The effect which they produced among a people who had for generations lived under foreign domination without forgetting their ancient freedom, may easily be imagined. Poets began to sing about the present woes and the departed glories of the race, and their impassioned words found a response in many hearts. From Slavonia, that had for ages borne her sufferings in silence, went up to heaven a long, low wail : " How long, Lord, how long ?" The strain was plaintive, for it thrilled with the consciousness of humiliating bondage and the memory of a thousand wrongs, but the melancholy was not unmixed with consolation, and the consolation not unmixed with hope. God had not utterly forgotten his people, and would in his own good time send a deliverer. Predictions that a brighter and a happier era lay in the future found numerous believers. To compare small things with great, those who are old enough to remember how many a cool-headed Englishman, whose grievances were comparatively slight, used to sing with enthusiasm, " There's a good time coming, boys !" may imagine the fervor awakened in impulsive Slavonian hearts by songs which pointed to the day when the brave, long-suffering Slavs would arise and free themselves from " the remorseless tyranny of the German, the Hungarian, and the Turk." From that wail of an oppressed race, recounting its ancient glories and looking with longing eyes for the advent of a brighter day, there was but one step to the conception of a Panslavonic empire, with Constantinople as its capital.

We have here a whole world of deep sentiments and wild aspirations, of which West-Europeans are profoundly ignorant, and with which, if they knew it, they could scarcely be expected to sympathize ; but it would have been strange indeed if this enthusiasm had found no response among the Russians, who are the only Slavonic people that has succeeded in realizing those aspirations, and who are singularly sensitive to the infectious influence of grand, misty conceptions. The wonder is that the response should have been so slight—all the more, as the hegemony in any Panslavonic confederation would naturally devolve upon Russia. Among Russians in general the amount of Slavonic sentiment is, indeed, in ordinary times very small, but it exists to a large extent in a latent state, and is easily awakened by abnormal conditions.

We come now to the third element in the force which draws

Russia towards the Bosphorus—I mean the political. Here, again, we come to the problem of territorial expansion. What reasonable motives has Russia for wishing to push forward her frontier in that direction?

Two of the chief elements in the expansive tendency as exemplified in the past may be dismissed with a single sentence. As the valley of the Danube and the Balkan Peninsula are already densely populated, they do not present a field for colonization, nor does Russia require to make annexations in this region for the purpose of self-defense. If she has any views of territorial aggrandizement in that direction they must belong to the category of motives which I have called “high political aims.”

Russia has long aspired to be a great naval power, and has consequently striven to reach the sea-coast. To the north and north-east she succeeded, but neither the Polar Ocean nor the Baltic fulfilled satisfactorily the required conditions, and she naturally turned her eyes to the Mediterranean. With difficulty she gained possession of the northern and eastern shores of the Black Sea, but the design has been thereby only half realized, for the only outlet from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean lies through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, which the Turks open and close according to their good pleasure.

There can be no doubt that Russia would very much prefer having in her own possession the keys of this important passage. In many respects it is very disagreeable to her that Turkey should be able, without employing a single ship of war, to blockade effectually all her southern ports. Here is, I believe, the only real, reasonable motive which Russia has for wishing to gain possession of Constantinople. All the others which are commonly quoted are more or less visionary. The idea of transferring the capital from the Neva to the Golden Horn is never for a moment entertained by any serious statesman. The oft-repeated, but seldom-proved, assertion that Russia might seriously embarrass our communications with India and dispute with us the naval supremacy of the Mediterranean, scarcely deserves more attention. The possession of the Dardanelles gives naval supremacy merely in the Black Sea, and not in the Mediterranean; and in the event of a war, it can matter little to us whether the Russian fleet is shut up in the Black Sea or in the harbor of Sebastopol. In either case it is quite harmless so far as

the Mediterranean and our communications with India are concerned.

There remains, of course, the grandiloquent aphorism, attributed to Napoleon I. and other high authorities, that "the power which possesses Constantinople must be mistress of the world!" If the Turks hold this doctrine it may account to some extent for their inordinate national vanity. Certainly many Christians hold it, and often use it as an unanswerable argument. For my own part, I have very frequently heard it enounced, but I do not understand the language of transcendental politics, and, unfortunately, I have never found any one who could construe for me the mystic words into plain English. Still, whether true or not, it must be taken into account. A wide-spread conviction of this kind, which is commonly accepted in Western Europe, is pretty certain to influence Russian as well as British statesmen.

Let us now endeavor to understand clearly the position, action, and aims of Russia in the present state of the Eastern Question. All the three factors which I have enumerated—the religious, the ethno-sentimental, and the purely political—have been brought into play, and each of the three has found its special representatives. Speaking roughly, we may say that the religious motive has animated the common people, the ethno-sentimental has inspired the educated classes, and the purely political has been represented by the Government. Of course, this statement must not be taken too literally. The educated classes have not been entirely strangers to the religious motive, and the Government has been to some extent affected by the ethno-sentimental influence, whilst natural, human sympathy with the victims of barbarous cruelty has moved deeply the whole nation. For the sake of convenience, however, we may accept the above statement as approximatively true.

The non-official action of Russia has centered around the "Slavonic Committee," a benevolent society composed of three sections—one in Moscow, a second in St. Petersburg, and a third in Kief. The common idea that this is a secret revolutionary society is absurdly erroneous. It is duly authorized by the Government, holds its meetings in public, and has for some years expended annually considerable sums for charitable purposes. Previous to the outbreak of the insurrection in Herzegovina, its activity consisted in aiding non-Russian Slavs settled in Russia, in

subscribing money for the cause of education among the Southern Slavs, in educating young Bulgarians in Russia, and in sending money, ecclesiastical vessels, vestments, &c., to the Orthodox churches in Austria and Turkey. Its members and supporters—many of them pious, charitable, well-intentioned ladies—are people of strong Orthodox feelings, and nearly all more or less animated with Slavophil sentiments. It would be rash to assert that none of the members were actuated by political or semi-political motives, or to deny that they intentionally or unintentionally fostered among the Bulgarians and other branches of the Slav race the feelings of discontent and the political aspirations which had been originally engendered by tyranny and misrule. Intentionally or unintentionally the Society inspired many Slavs in Turkey and Austria with the belief that they had in Russia a protector, to whom they might look for assistance in the hour of danger. But it must be admitted that whatever it did, it did openly. Detailed reports of its proceedings were largely circulated in Russia and freely given to foreigners. The secretary of the Moscow section, for instance, though he had no reason to suppose that I specially sympathized with the object in view, kindly supplied me with a copy of the reports for several years. Anything less secret or less revolutionary—so far at least as home politics are concerned—than this association, it would be difficult to imagine. There is a revolutionary element in Russia, but it has no connection and no sympathy with the Slavonic Committee. It is so very far “advanced” that it regards nationality, patriotism, race, and religion as antiquated puerilities of a past era. Its representatives, foolish youths who have occasionally attempted to create secret political societies, are extreme socialistic radicals, quite innocent of sympathy with the doctrine of Nationalities, and animated with a positive hatred of religious belief in general and Greek Orthodoxy in particular. Nor do they desire that Russia should make any new territorial acquisitions; for the expansion of the Empire at present would be tantamount to an extension of autocracy, which is one of the chief objects of their aversion. Their theological and political convictions were briefly summed up in the first line of a song which one of them wrote for the edification of the peasantry: “*Nyet ni Bóga ni Tsariá!*” that is to say, “There is neither God nor Tsar!” The idea that men who indite or chant hymns of that description can have anything

in common with the Orthodox, loyal Slavonic Committee is exquisitely ludicrous.*

When the insurrection broke out in Herzegovina the Metropolitans of Servia and Montenegro made appeals to the charitable in aid of the sufferers. These appeals were published in the Russian newspapers, and read by the parish priests in the churches, and very soon donations began to flow in. About the month of March it became evident that Servia and Montenegro were about to take part with the insurgents, and some Russian nobles determined to go and serve as volunteers. Among these was General Tchernáyef, who had made for himself, by his campaigns in Central Asia, the reputation of a brave, able soldier, and an honest patriotic man. He announced his intention to the Slavonic Committee, and they highly approved of it, because they believed that "this act of self-sacrifice could not but raise among the Slavonians the honor of the Russian name, greatly compromised by diplomacy, and could not fail at the same time to raise the moral level of Russian society by increasing its self-respect." The latter half of this reasoning, which must seem to the practical Englishman extremely far-fetched, is very characteristic of the Russians of the present generation.

The war in Servia began, and the uneven struggle was watched in Russia with breathless anxiety. The Servians began by advancing, but had soon to retreat. Then came the news that a Russian had fallen—Nicholas Kiréef,—formerly an officer of the Guards, and well known in the society of Moscow and St. Petersburg—had fallen mortally wounded whilst gallantly leading on his men at Zaitchar, and his body, it was said, had been brutally mutilated by the Turks. This naturally produced a profound impression on those who had been personally acquainted with

* The proceedings of the Committee, and the popular movement which it in some measure directed, were accurately described in a speech delivered by Mr. Ivan Aksáakof, at the meeting of the Moscow Section on 6th November (24th October, *old style*). This speech, translated into English and printed in a condensed form by a Russian lady, has already received some attention in the English press. Having compared the translation with the original I may state that a number of tiresome details and some natural expressions of patriotic sentiment have been suppressed, but no important facts have been omitted. As to the authenticity of the testimony I may add that I have long known Mr. Aksáakof, and have never in any country met a more honest and truthful man.

Kiréef, but, strange to say, the impression it produced on the lower classes, who had never before heard of him, was much stronger. The incidents of his death were embellished by the popular imagination, and awoke anew a host of old memories and old passions that had long been lying dormant. Other Russians fell, and the enthusiasm increased. Meanwhile the Turks had committed their "grand mistake." When all eyes were fixed on the Morava and the Timok a cry was heard from the background, and all who had any human feeling in them stood aghast at the awful spectacle presented by the Bulgarian villages in the peaceful valley of the Maritsa.

The Russian peasant is profoundly ignorant of the intricate details of the Eastern question. Of ordinary *Rayah* grievances, such as inordinate taxation, judicial corruption, prohibitions against the ringing of church-bells, and exclusion from military service, he knows nothing, and if he did know the facts his indignation would not be violently aroused. As to exclusion from military service, he would regard that as a valuable privilege, and as to mal-administration in its milder forms, judicial corruption, and inordinately heavy taxes, his natural horror of such things has been somewhat deadened by personal acquaintance with them. Thus, the tale of ordinary Turkish misrule would fail to move him. But tales of a death-struggle with the Moslem—tales of massacres, slave-dealing, and ruthless destruction of villages among an Orthodox population by hordes of savage Mahometans—these have upon him a very different effect. The old spirit which won the steppe, inch by inch, from the nomadic hordes, is not yet quite extinct, and the stories of the few who returned to their homes from the slave-markets of the Crimea have not yet been quite forgotten. And as in old times the Muzhik hastily picked up his hatchet and ran to the rescue when he heard the cry, "The Tartars are upon us! Our people are being killed," so the Muzhik of our own day is ready to lend a hand when the cry comes from the Orthodox brethren beyond the Danube.

The educated classes have not this personal, traditional recollection, so to speak, of Tartar barbarities,—this Orthodox hatred of the pillaging Bussurmanyé,* but they have a very large fund

* Bussurmanyé is a word which the Russian peasant uses when speaking with hatred or contempt of the Mahometans. I say "*pillaging* Bussurmanyé," because the Muzhik, as I have already remarked, has no hatred for the *tamed* Tartar.

the undesirable, as well as the desirable items in the long list of future contingencies.

Whether the idea of Russia gaining possession of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles really belongs, as Prince Gortchakoff would have us believe, to the region of "Political Mythology," we need not at present consider; certain it is that for the present this idea is not seriously entertained. Alexander II. is not only naturally a pacific man, but he is endowed with such a large amount of sober common-sense, and is at the same time so deeply conscious of the enormous responsibility of his position, that he is one of the last men in the world to embark on any grand, fantastic schemes. He has already done great work in his time—work that must for ever give his name a very prominent place in European history. Though his efforts have been attended with a large measure of success, he must have shattered illusions enough to warn him against grand, uncertain projects. He is reported to have said that there will be no more grand reforms in Russia during his reign, and this prediction, whether made by him or invented by others, will in all probability be fulfilled.

Even if Alexander II. were ambitious and imbued with Panslavistic ideas, he would scarcely have chosen the present moment for raising the Eastern Question. The country has just been subjected to a series of gigantic reforms and is still in a state of transition. Though the finances are sound, the people are heavily taxed, and the revenue is not elastic enough to bear easily the strain of a long and expensive war. The army has just been re-organized on entirely new principles, and its efficiency has not yet been tested. The other Powers which are interested in the Eastern Question are in no way fettered by existing complications, and would not remain passive spectators if any ambitious schemes of conquest were attempted. Even a struggle with Turkey alone is not at all desirable. Though in such a struggle Russia would no doubt be ultimately successful, success would not be obtained without great dangers and great sacrifices. The southern ports would be at once blockaded, and the fortifications defending the line of the Danube, which are far stronger than is commonly supposed, would prove an almost insurmountable barrier to an invading army.*

* I have very good reasons for confidently asserting that this fact is well known to the higher military authorities in Russia.

If the invading army attempted to avoid that barrier and entered Turkey by way of Serbia, it would be dependent for its communications on the good-will of Austria. Bearing all this in mind, we need have little difficulty in believing that the Russian Government honestly endeavored to hold back Serbia and Montenegro, and really desired the immediate pacification of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Why, then, did it not speak out in clear unmistakable language, and, at least, suppress the popular movement within its own borders?

Some people declare that the movement was too strong for the Government, that Autocracy in Russia has lost its power, and that the Tsar, like despotic rulers in general, must periodically go to war in order to avert the attention of his subjects from home politics. All these suppositions are utterly false. Russian autocracy, founded on the unbounded hereditary devotion of the people—peasantry and nobles alike—cannot for a moment be compared with French autocracy in the time of Napoleon III.; and never was the Autocratic Power in Russia stronger or more secure than at the present moment. The Government could not, of course, have prevented its subjects from sympathizing with the Slavs, but it could at once have closed all sections of the Slavonic Committee, prevented the enrollment of volunteers, and suppressed the popular demonstrations.

And yet it must be confessed that the Government was in a certain sense “forced” to take part in the movement. In the Slavonic Question there is a purely political as well as a sentimental element.

The aspirations of the Southern Slavs, however visionary they may be, add in many ways to the influence of Russia, and no Russian sovereign who seeks to uphold and extend the influence of his country can afford to overlook them. As soon, therefore, as any great movement takes place among the Slavs, Russia is “forced,” in order to preserve her position in the Slavonic world, to take an active part, whether she desires it or not. In the present case she did not, I believe, desire it. For some time the Imperial Government evidently assumed that the insurrection would soon subside, and that all difficulties might be avoided by “masterly inactivity,” “judicious bottle-holding,” and other expedients with which British statesmen are not altogether unacquainted. When this illusion

was dispelled, and the Sick Man displayed an unexpected amount of military vitality, the Tsar began to feel the terrible weight of his undefined responsibilities, and sought to escape from them by preserving the concert of the Great Powers. Then came the fall of Djunis, which compelled him to act independently. Had he allowed Servia to be devastated with fire and sword the name of Russian would have become a by-word, and a reproach among all sections of the Slavonic race. But he still desired, if possible, to avoid war, and accordingly showed himself ready to make all manner of concessions. Thus all through the negotiations Russia has played the part of a man who wishes to keep a fire lighted, and yet does not wish to expend fuel. Again and again, whilst observing closely her policy towards the Servians and Montenegrins, I have been reminded of the anecdote about the French revolutionary leader, who, before advancing to a barricade, pointed to the crowd and whispered confidentially to a friend: "Il faut bien les suivre ; je suis leur chef !"

Whatever the result of the present negotiations may be, the arrangement will be merely temporary. We ought always to remember that, as Mr. Grant Duff geographically puts it, "the Christian races inhabiting the Eastern Peninsula must eventually grow over the head alike of the Turk and of the Mussulman Slavonian." And beyond the Slavonic Question lies the Eastern Question in the wider sense of the term. The destinies of Asia are to a great extent in the hands of Russia and England. Though the field is wide enough for both, and the history of the Conference gives good omens for the future, it would be childishly sanguine to imagine that we shall never disagree. Let us always beware, however, of mistaking imaginary for real interests, and of fighting about a misunderstanding. Meanwhile, our duty is clear. We ought to know Russia better, and thereby avoid unnecessary collisions. It is in the hope of contributing in some small measure to this desirable object that the present work has been written.*

* Part of this chapter appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* for August, 1876. In former chapters I inadvertently omitted to confess my obligations to Mr. G. Asher, Professor of the University of Heidelberg.

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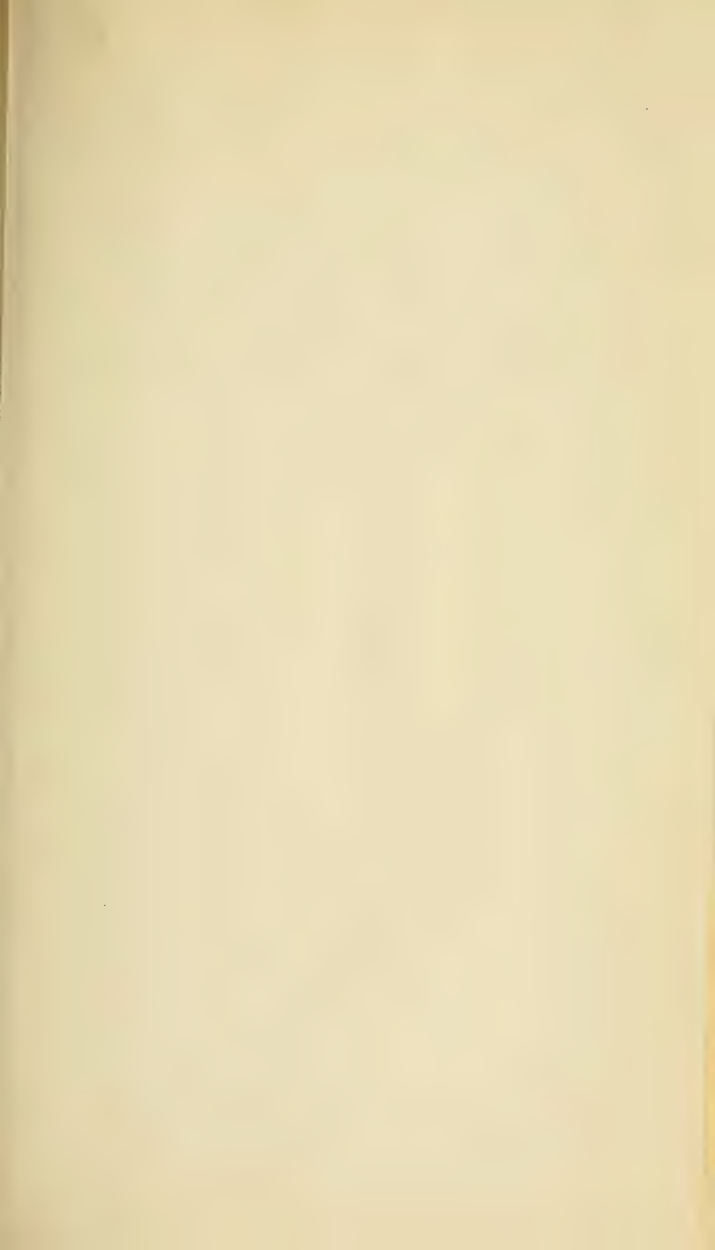
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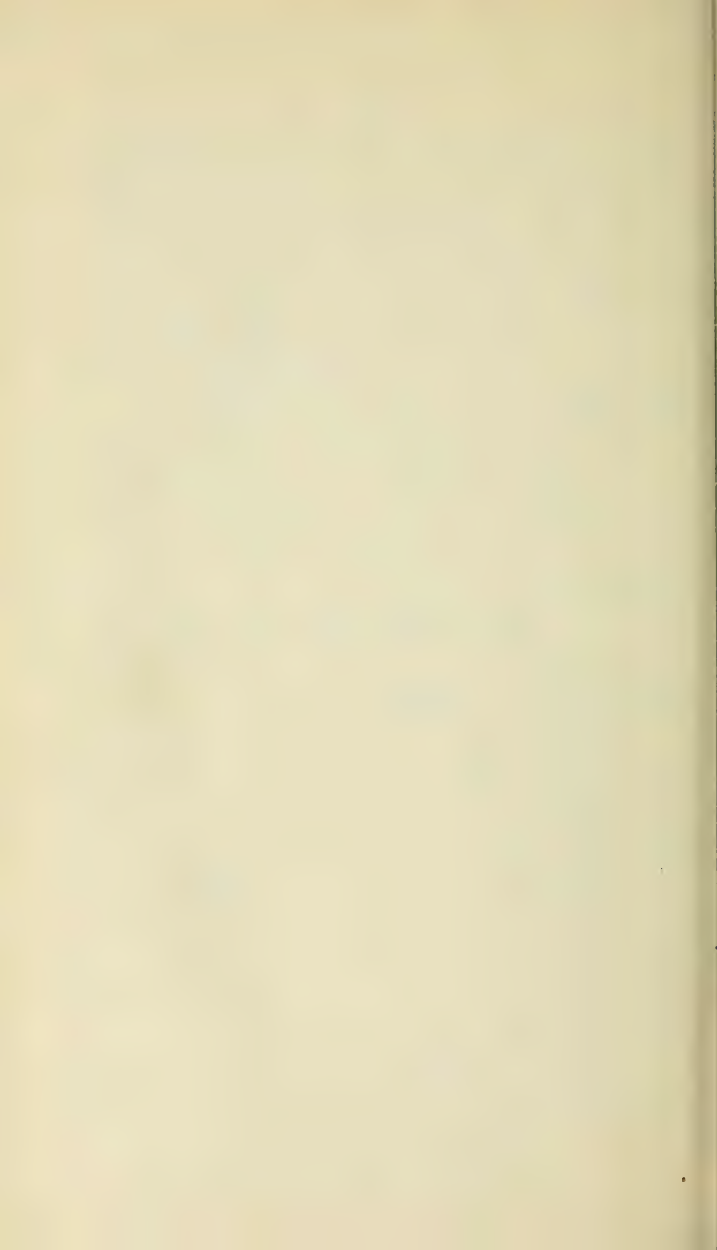
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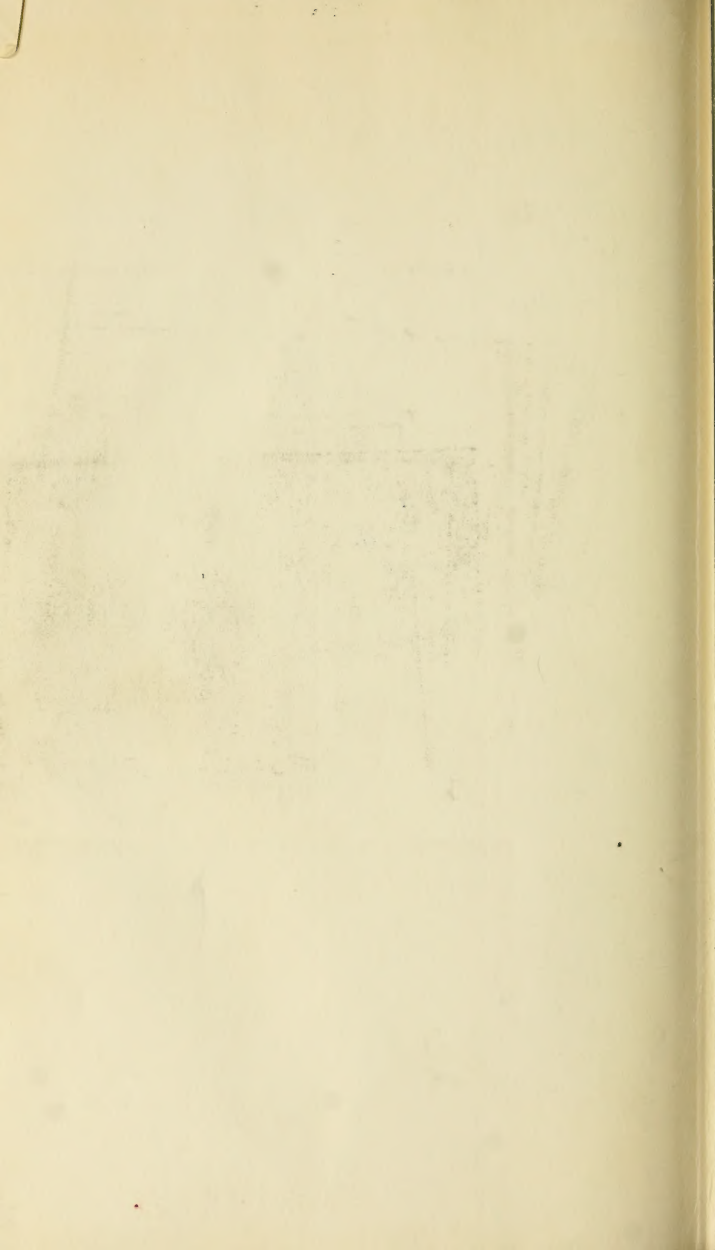
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